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**University of Cape Town**



**EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FACING RURAL WOMEN IN  
MATABELELAND SOUTH, ZIMBABWE**

**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree  
of**

**MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**By**

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To the Almighty God, who perfects everything in me, thank you for keeping me afloat. Indeed, Yours is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You must be exalted as Head over all.

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*—Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu—*

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe. An exploratory, qualitative approach was adopted since this design was deemed most appropriate.

The objectives of the study are to explore how women assess their situation in Matabeleland South with regards to their socio economic realities; to find out the individual and community circumstances that these rural women in the drought prone region find themselves in; to explore the most important development challenges in relation to the impacts of climate change, access to water, food insecurity, poverty, education and health facilities; to examine the survival strategies that rural women adopt in the present situation and to ascertain the recommendations they make to the government and Non Governmental Organisations to improve their situation.

A focus group discussion and face to face interviews were conducted on a non probability sample of 32 participants. Data was analysed using Tesch's approach to data analysis (Tesch, 1990). Findings from the study show that Matabeleland South faces severe development challenges which are interrelated. The findings further highlight that food insecurity is the major development challenge facing the area.

Despite the magnitude of these challenges, however, there are no effective strategies to address these issues in the community. As a result poverty and food insecurity have become a chronic problem in the community.

Recommendations are made to the Non Governmental Organisations and the government, as well as for further research.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AU: African Union

ANC: African National Congress

CGIAR: Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

DFID: Department for International Development

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

GWP: Global Water Partnership

HDI: Human Development Index

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

ICN: International Conference on Nutrition

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LDS: Lutheran Development Services

Mat South: Matabeleland South

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

NGO: Non Governmental Organisation

PACS: Poorest Areas Civil Society

PCD: People Centred Development

SALDRU: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit

SARPN: Southern African Regional Poverty Network

US: United States

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

UN: United Nations

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNDP: United Nations Development Report

UZ: University of Zimbabwe

WHO: World Health Organisation

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front

ZimVAC: Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Rural women play a fundamental role in rural economic growth and poverty reduction. They are the cornerstones in most homes and according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO 2010) they fill many crucial roles, as farmers, wage labourers and small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as caretakers of children and the elderly. However, despite the role that they play they are hampered by persistent gender inequities that limit their access to services, which they need as a vehicle for economic empowerment, social advancement and political participation. Yet despite these limitations and the enormous burden of unpaid and mostly invisible work they provide at home and in family businesses every day, women make substantial contributions to feeding their families and their nations (FAO 2010).

Also affecting their ability to live a better life are development challenges that include: lack of decent employment, gender gaps in earnings, unequal access to markets, climate change and natural disasters, food insecurity, lack of access to clean water, lack of access to education and health facilities and poverty. Policymakers and researchers seeking to resolve these challenges are hindered by gaps in data and analysis. Without that information it is impossible to analyse these fundamental issues or propose appropriate responses (FAO, 2010).

This research seeks to contribute to this knowledge by exploring the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South in Zimbabwe. Much has been written about challenges that rural women face. However, the Matabeleland South situation has not been adequately researched.

This chapter introduces the statement of the problem, the context of the study, the rationale and significance of the study, the problem formulation in relation to the research questions and research objectives and clarification of concepts.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The research was inspired by the fact that not much has been written about the challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South.

Zimbabwe has been going through major social and economic challenges since the early nineties. According to Alertnet (2009), almost twenty years ago, the country was hailed as an African success story and dubbed the "breadbasket" of Southern Africa. Now the country, which was Africa's most prosperous country, has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world at 34 years and a large proportion of the population is dependent on food aid (Alertnet 2009; Coltart 2008). –Since 1994, the average life expectancy in Zimbabwe has fallen from 57 years to 34 years for women and from 54 years to 37 years for men. Some 3 500 Zimbabweans die every week from the combined effects of HIV/AIDS, poverty, and malnutrition," (Coltart 2008:1). Mambondiani (2008) further states that the former –breadbasket" of Southern Africa has been undergoing a spiralling decline in agricultural production since 2000. The decline is linked to the political situation, drought, HIV/AIDS and controversial government land reforms. In addition, the United States (US) and Britain instituted sanctions against Zimbabwe after the land reform programme which sought to redistribute land formerly owned by white colonial farmers in 2000 (Hondora 2008). It is important to note that in his argument Coltart (2008) states that the sanctions did not contribute to the economic collapse of Zimbabwe. –ZANU-PF government has been at pains to blame economic collapse on the combination of Western sanctions and drought. Neither of those was the main cause of the problems that the country faces. Targeted sanctions imposed on top government officials by the West only came into effect in 2002—some five years after Zimbabwe's economic collapse began" (Coltart 2008:3).

Statistics indicate that earnings/export income from tobacco, which was the country's highest foreign currency earner, dropped from US\$600 million in 2000 to less than US\$125 million in 2007. –Blessed with some of the best mineral reserves in the world, Zimbabwe has vast deposits of iron, nickel, platinum, coal, chrome, asbestos, diamonds, tantalite, coal bed methane, and gold. Yet mining, which should have boomed over the last decade because of global economic expansion in general and China's hunger for natural resources in particular, has, with the notable exception of platinum, all but collapsed” (Coltart 2008:3).

2008 was the worst year in the history of the Zimbabwean political and social crisis (Mambondiani 2008; Coltart 2008). Almost 100 000 Zimbabweans were infected and affected by cholera. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Case Fatality Outbreak indicated that the situation was one of the world's largest ever recorded (IRIN News 2009). Mambondiani (2008) adds that Zimbabwe is in the grip of its worst humanitarian crisis since independence. According to Alertnet (2010), about 2.4 million people received food assistance in the first quarter of 2010 and quotes a 2010 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report which states that about 60 percent of the population of Zimbabwe lives below the food poverty line. People living below the food poverty line cannot meet any of their basic needs and suffer chronic hunger. The report estimates that 6.6 million people, including 3.5 million children, were suffering from this extreme form of deprivation.

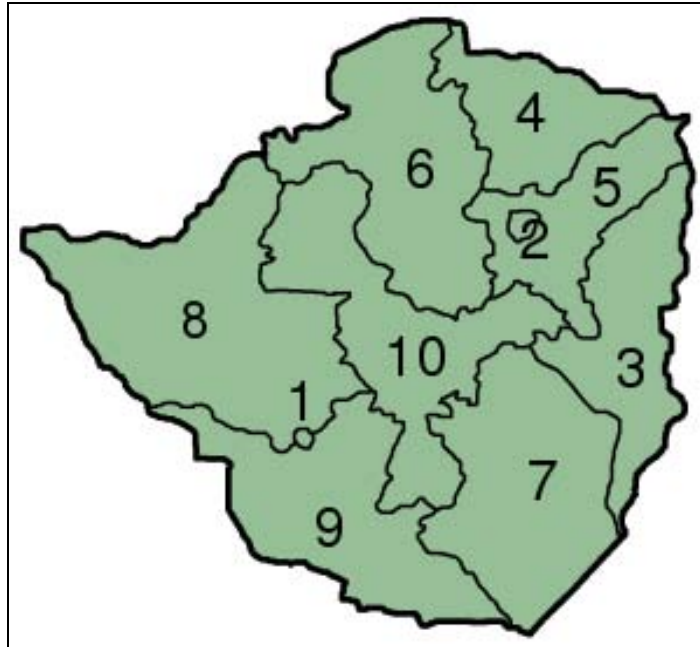
Water, food and electricity shortages are some of the obvious indicators of the crisis in the country (Alertnet 2010). The political, social and economic situation in Zimbabwe continues to be difficult. The incomplete land reform programme, sporadic incidence of violence, hyper-inflation, the shortage of most key commodities, droughts and floods, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have contributed to a low standard of living (International Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008). Poverty is pervasive, and is aggravated by declining food security and health delivery. Gender inequality, though being continuously addressed through various national policies, still remains high (Lutheran Development Services (LDS) 2009). As a result, rural women are the ones who suffer the most because of the negative economic, political and social circumstances in the country.

The country's economy registered its first growth in a decade in 2009 after the coalition government of President Robert Mugabe and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai implemented measures, including the adoption of multiple currencies that controlled hyperinflation. However, incessant disagreements between Mugabe and Tsvangirai over how to share executive power continue to scare away foreign investors whose funds are vital to any effort to rebuild Zimbabwe's shattered economy (Alertnet 2010). In addition, Western nations, unconvinced by Mugabe's commitment to democratic reforms, have refused to provide direct financial support to the government demanding more political reforms and an end to human rights abuses before they make money available. In the absence of support from Western governments, the International Monetary Fund and other multi-lateral institutions, Zimbabwe's economic recovery has remained fragile, since the country also remains heavily dependent on foreign humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of its population (Alertnet 2010).

A severe drought in 2010 also impacted the country's ability to produce enough food and meet its demands. An assessment done at the beginning of April 2010 indicated that crops had failed in all districts of the country, and tens of thousand tons of maize would be required each month to mitigate the effects of the expected food shortages (Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development 2010). According to the country's 2010 First Round Crop and Livestock Assessment Report, over 11 per cent of the maize crop planted in the 2009/2010 summer season was declared a complete write-off. Poor rains and hailstorms affected 200 574 hectares of maize out of a total 1 723 990 hectares planted this season. The most affected regions were Matabeleland South and North (Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development 2010). In addition, Practical Action Southern Africa (2010) stated that the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) estimated that a total of 2.17 million people were food insecure in 2010 and that the country's Matabeleland South and North provinces' communities required urgent food aid owing to widespread crop failure. Up to 1.3 million people were in need of emergency food with Matabeleland being the most affected as 700 000 people faced starvation.

Against this background, a study was conducted in the Sababa village in the Insiza District which is in the Matabeleland South Province in the Southern part of Zimbabwe. Insiza is located about 100 kilometres south of Gwanda, the administrative town of Insiza District, about 150 kilometres from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city (refer to Map 1 and 2 below).

**Map 1: Zimbabwe Provinces**



Source: [www.googlemaps.com](http://www.googlemaps.com) 1988

Zimbabwe is divided into eight provinces and 2 cities with provincial status.

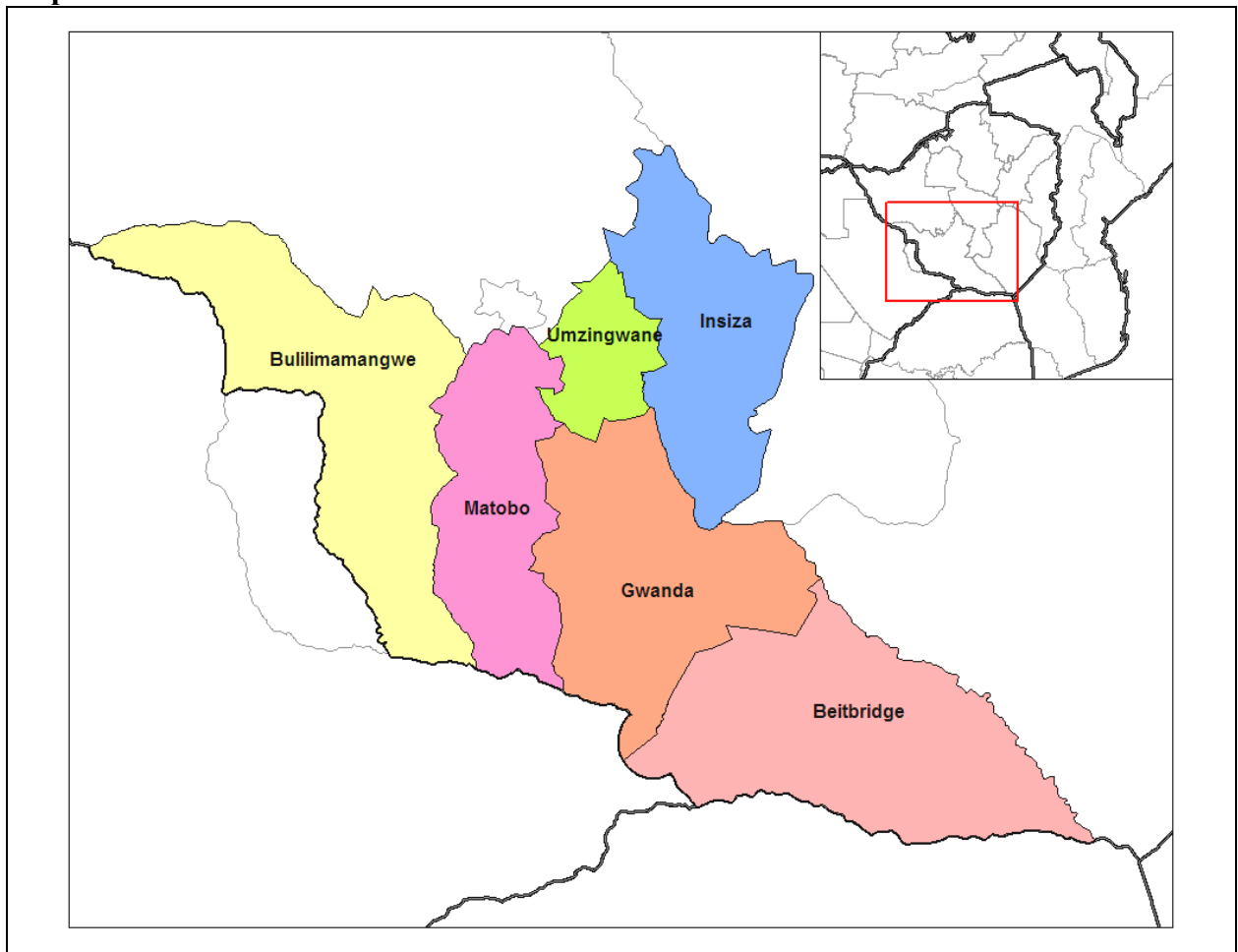
Map key	Province	Map key	Province
1	Bulawayo	6	Mashonaland West
2	Harare	7	Masvingo Province
3	Manicaland	8	Matabeleland North
4	Mashonaland Central	9	Matabeleland South
5	Mashonaland East	10	Midlands Province



The study is located in the Sababa village under the province of Matabeleland South.

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**Map 2: Matabeleland South Districts**



Source: [www.googlemaps.com](http://www.googlemaps.com)

The study is located in the Insiza district in the village of Sababa.

### 1.3 The Context of the Study

The geographical location of this study falls in the rural Matabeleland South province in the southern side of Zimbabwe.

According to LDS (2009), the land in most rural areas of Zimbabwe is separated into small land holdings from which individuals generate a living usually from subsistence farming. Moseley and Logan (2001) assert that chronic poverty is related to Zimbabwean rural areas. The Matabeleland province according to Bird and Shepherd (2003) is wrought with ‘spatial poverty’ caused by government spending on infrastructure and services elsewhere or because of political and tribal exclusion from mainstream development. Wiggins (2004) suggests that this poverty in the Matabeleland provinces is related to ongoing Ndebele-Shona post-independence conflict, which has never been addressed. The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government became involved in two overlapping conflicts in Matabeleland around the early 1980s which resulted in 20 000 deaths and disappearances. The Ndebele people predominantly live in Matabeleland and make up 14 per cent of the country’s populace. The results of the 2002 and 2008 elections substantiated the fact that the ruling ZANU PF party led by Robert Mugabe is not supported in Matabeleland. It is therefore generally believed that the Ndebele have been deliberately excluded from the development agenda (Wiggins 2004).

Rural poverty in Matabeleland is multifaceted and is noticeable because of the apparent deprivations. Poor access to health and educational services, poor roads and infrastructure and food shortages are evident (Maphosa 2009; Moseley and Logan 2001). The socio-political and economic situation of Zimbabwe has exacerbated the situation for Matabeleland South. Due to the migration of youth and the adult male population to other towns and urban centres, there are generally more dependents in rural spaces, mainly women and children (Moseley and Logan, 2001). To this end, the Human Rights Watch (2008) states that mass out-migration would seem to be a perfectly predictable consequence of Zimbabwe’s economic and social collapse. The Zimbabwean government’s political actions and the country’s decline have led to the Zimbabweans’ economic destitution and desperation, and

have ultimately forced them to leave the country to survive the political and economic crisis (Human Rights Watch 2008).

Maphosa (2009) states that Zimbabwe is divided into five agro-ecological regions based on the average amount of rainfall received annually and potential for agricultural activity. The Matabeleland South region predominantly lies in the agriculturally marginal and drought prone –Region V” which is characterised by low rainfall patterns, poor soils, hot weather and persistent droughts. This results in low agricultural production (Maphosa 2009). Maphosa (2009) further states that agricultural production, particularly crop production in this part of the country is largely for subsistence. Even in a good year, very few households are left with surplus produce from which they can obtain an income. The rainfall pattern is erratic and unreliable, therefore both potent surface and underground water for domestic use is scarce (Maphosa 2009; World Vision 2004). There are no perennial rivers and water for domestic use is obtained from boreholes or extracted from river beds (Maphosa 2009). Although the area is known to have problems in water supply, the condition has been worsened by the consecutive droughts that Zimbabwe experienced since 1992. These recurrent droughts and floods have resulted in more and more people being vulnerable. As a result, the region has been declared a state of national disaster more than four times between 1995 and 2003 (Maphosa 2009).

## **1.4 Rationale and Significance of the Study**

Basically, this study examines development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South so as to influence policy directions in implementing development strategies that advocate for the inclusion of rural women in their own development. It seeks to highlight the development challenges in order to help the government and the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector to ameliorate the plight of women. By examining the challenges, the researcher will gain insight into issues that facilitate or work against women’s development. Furthermore, the study would provide insight into rural challenges from the perspective of women.

## **1.5 The Research Topic**

**Exploring the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe.**

## **1.6 Research Questions**

- How would rural women describe their situation in Matabeleland with regards to their socio-economic realities?
- What are the individual and community circumstances that rural women in the drought prone region find themselves in?
- What are the most important development challenges facing rural women in relation to the impacts of climate change, access to water, food insecurity, poverty and access to education and health services and facilities?
- What survival strategies are rural women adopting in the present situation?
- What recommendations would they make to government and NGOs to improve their situation?

## **1.7 Research Objectives**

- To explore how women describe their situation in Matabeleland South with regards to their socio economic realities.
- To find out the individual and community circumstances that rural women in the drought prone region find themselves in.
- To explore the most important development challenges in relation to the impacts of climate change, access to water, food insecurity, poverty and access to education and health services and facilities.
- To examine survival strategies that rural women adopt in the present situation.
- To ascertain the recommendations that they would make to the government and NGOs to improve their situation.

## 1.8 Clarification of Concepts

This section will clarify the concepts of development, rural development, food insecurity, and poverty as used in this study.

### 1.8.1 Development

There are various theories about what development is. It is a contested term with little agreement about what it means, let alone on how to achieve it. The concept of development is contested both theoretically and politically, and is inherently both complex and ambiguous (Karp and Masolo 2000). Burkey (1993) states that discussions on the meaning of development are peppered with notions of modernisation, community development, structural adjustment, eco-development, self-reliance and participation. Karp and Masolo (2000) further indicate that ‘development’ in all its many usages and with its complex associations with ideas about progress, modernity, and rationality, is an important theme in the African context.

Burkey (1993) further contends that the term development can also refer to those investments and services carried out or provided by a community for the mutual benefit of the people of that community, village, district or a nation. These services might include health services and facilities, education, water supplies, energy transport systems and communications. By the same token, Korten (1990) describes it as more than just the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. It involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society. These changes must come from within the individuals and groups, and cannot be imposed from the outside.

While Karp and Masolo (2000), Burkey (1993) and Korten’s (1990) notions of development are important, Sen (1999) offers a comprehensive framework for understanding development. Sen (1999) suggests five criteria or requirements that facilitate development. These requirements are (1) *political freedoms*, (2) *economic facilities*, (3) *social opportunities*, (4) *transparency guarantees* and (5) *protective security*. Each of these distinct types of rights and

opportunities when complementing each other help to advance the general capability of a person. Public policy can promote these distinct but interrelated instrumental freedoms and opportunities to improve the quality of life for individuals.

The requirements for development can be described as an individual's ability to participate freely in the political process, the capacity to seek economic well-being, the networks and connections which make social integration possible, free access to reliable information sources, and structures which allow personal safety. As Sen (1999) rightly states enhancement of human freedom is both the main object and the primary means of development. The objective of development relates to the valuation of the actual freedoms enjoyed by the people involved. Individual capabilities crucially depend on, among other things, economic, social, and political arrangements. In making appropriate institutional arrangements, the instrumental roles of distinct types of freedom have to be considered, going well beyond the foundational importance of the overall freedom of individuals (Sen 1999). Sen (1999) further states that the process of development is crucially influenced by these interconnections. There is a need to develop and support a plurality of institutions, including democratic systems, legal mechanisms, market structures, educational and health provisions, media and other communication facilities that correspond to multiple interconnected freedoms. "The institutions can incorporate private initiatives as well as public arrangements and also more mixed structures, such as nongovernmental organisations and cooperative entities. The ends and means of development call for placing the perspective of freedom at the centre of the stage. The people have to be seen, in this perspective, as being actively involved in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of shrewd development programmes. The state and the society have extensive roles in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities" (Sen 1999: 53).

Furthermore, Sen (1999) states that development entails the removal of major sources of unfreedom. These may include poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, access to education and health, climate change neglect of public services as well as intolerance. With about 60 percent of the population in Zimbabwe

living under the poverty line it is clear that the major sources of unfreedom have not been adequately addressed.

### **1.8.2 Rural Development**

The term rural development is an evolving concept whose ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of people. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2005) indicates that approaches to rural development have progressed since the 1970s. Although policymakers and the development community widely use the term ‘rural development’, its meaning seems to have changed over time. The UNDP (2005) notes that prior to the 1970s rural development was synonymous with agricultural development, and hence focused on increasing agricultural production. By the early 1980s, the World Bank defined it as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, who are namely the rural people.

Chambers (1983) agrees that the concept of rural development is fundamentally different from what it used to be about three or four decades ago. Burkey (1993) sees it as the rural poor being given access to land and water resources, agricultural inputs and services, extension and research facilities. The UNDP (2005) states that rural development now encompasses concerns that go well beyond improvements in growth, income and output. The concerns now include an assessment of changes in the quality of life, broadly defined to include improvement of health and nutrition, education, environmentally safe living conditions, and reduction in gender and income inequalities. This study will use the definition provided by the UNDP (2005). Special attention will be paid to the plight of rural women, food insecurity, the impact of climate change, poverty, access to water, education and health facilities.

### **1.8.3 Food Insecurity**

Prior to providing a definition to food insecurity, this section will begin by defining what food security is.



The terms food security and food insecurity just like poverty and development are highly contested terms. According to Mwaniki (2007) food security means a state of affairs where all people at all times have access to safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Mwaniki (2007) further states that the World Food Summit of 1996 defines food security as a concept which has three key elements: food availability, food access and food utilisation. However, a fourth concept is increasingly becoming accepted namely, the risks that can disrupt anyone of the first three factors. Ogoi and Adetokunbo (2007) define food security as access by all people at all times to sufficient food for a healthy and productive life. According to this definition there are four major elements that constitute food security. These are availability, adequacy, accessibility and sustainability of access. Availability and adequacy refer to the physical presence of food in sufficient amounts, accessibility and sustainability suggests sufficient purchasing power or ability to acquire quality food at all times. The elements of availability accessibility and sustainability in a larger context embrace the supply, demand and adequacy of food at all times (Ogoi and Adetokunbo 2007).

FAO (2003) further adds that food security can refer to food supply, access to food and adequacy and utilisation of food and food processes. Wiggins (2004) also asserts that the definition should ~~include~~ that people do not fear loss of food security". However, food insecurity, like poverty, can be seasonal, especially in the time period leading to the harvest (Wiggins 2004:37). This period is called the hungry season'. Corbett (1988) states that transient food insecurity during the hungry season is both recurrent and predictable. Chronic food insecurity, on the other hand, is an ongoing occurrence that usually affects a minority of the population (Bird and Shepherd, 2003).

Sen (1981) uses the word starvation to refer to food insecurity. He states that starvation is characterised by people not having enough to eat. In their examination of chronic poverty and food insecurity in Zimbabwe, Bird and Shepherd (2004:591) define the chronically poor as those ~~who~~ have lived below the income poverty line for five years and/or have experienced severe and multidimensional deprivations for several years". Corbett (1988) believes that chronic food insecurity is more severe and stems from mixed institutional failures such as socio-economic, environmental and political factors.

According to Hondora (2008) in Zimbabwe, the United Nations Development Programme report of 2008 states that approximately 5.8 million Zimbabweans, or 44 percent of the population, are currently food insecure and undernourished. The country is ranked as having the seventh highest death rate in the world, after countries like Sierra Leone and Lesotho. In 2008, it was recognised that there are 21.7 deaths per 1 000 people in Zimbabwe. Although it has not been ascertained exactly how many of these deaths have occurred because of scarcity and poverty, it is acknowledged that food insecurity has had the largest impact on these figures (Hondora 2008).

For this research, the African Union (AU)'s definition will be adopted. The AU (2005) states that food insecurity is a state where one is without physical and economic access to sufficient and safe food to lead a healthy and productive life.

#### **1.8.4 Poverty**

Poverty is also a contested concept as it means different things to different people. Swanepoel and De Beer (2006) say that even though most people recognise poverty when they see it, it is difficult to define in universal terms and often impossible to quantify. Narayan et al (2000) indicate that poverty is like heat, which one cannot see but can only feel. Meth (2006) on the other hand states that poverty is political because it relates to the allocation or distribution of resources, and reflects the impact of past and present policy choices. Kanbur and Squire (2000) also posit that even though the term poverty is contested, the definition has expanded to include longevity, literacy and health, vulnerability and risk, and well as powerlessness and lack of voice.

According to Davids *et al* (2005) various institutions play a role in empowering the poor through a range of development initiatives. The following section draws from Davids *et al*'s (2005) overview of four perspectives on poverty namely income, basic needs, social exclusion and human development.

### **The income perspective**

This view categorises people as poor if their income falls below a defined income measure. The poverty income line is defined as the level at which households have enough income for a specified amount of food, housing and transportation.

### **The basic needs perspective**

This is an international view on poverty, especially in the context of the developing world where millions of people live without access to clean air and water. A number of poverty indicators have originated from this view and these include access to portable water, literacy, life expectancy and nutrition levels. It is important to note that a significant number of Zimbabwean rural women do not have access to basic needs such as water, sanitation and electricity.

### **The social exclusion perspective**

This perspective originates from the First World and it encompasses people who are deprived and vulnerable despite that their needs are met.

### **Human development**

This perspective places emphasis on a holistic understanding of poverty. The focus is on anti-poverty actions that enlarge people's life choices. This refers to enabling individuals to lead a long and healthy life, in which they are educated and have access to a decent standard of living. Included in this notion of poverty alleviation is ensuring that human rights are upheld and that political and social freedoms are secure. In this view, public participation strategies must be introduced. This view offers an integrated and comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation that incorporates most of the key elements of the alternative views previously discussed. For this study, all four perspectives will be taken into account.

## **1.9 Main Ethical Considerations**

All research is governed by a code of ethics and the researcher ensured that this research was executed in an ethical manner.

### **1.9.1 Informed Consent**

One needs to obtain informed consent from all the participants in the study. Respondents should be given adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures to be followed in the research (De Vos *et al* 2005). Consent to do research was obtained from the relevant authorities in Matabeleland South (Appendix A). At the beginning of the interviews, the researcher made it clear that no participant was forced to do anything against his/her will. The participants were also allowed to withdraw from the research at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the process. However, no participant walked out of the interview even though some indicated that they were uncomfortable with the questions hence they did not respond to those questions. The consent of the participants was gained before recording the interviews.

### **1.9.2 Anonymity**

The subject's protection of their identity and well-being should be of primary consideration (Babbie and Mouton 2001). The participants have a right to know to whom their information will be given and for what purposes (De Vos 2005). The subject of development challenges, especially in a country like Zimbabwe, aroused sensitive responses from the women and key informants hence the researcher made sure that anonymity of the respondents was respected and they were not compromised in any way. The researcher asked them to use pseudonyms to protect themselves. The researcher used pseudonyms even for those participants who insisted on using their real names.

### **1.9.3 Rejection of any Form of Plagiarism**

One of the key ethical principles of research is to acknowledge one's sources. This means that one should refer to any source, which one has consulted, and which has made a significant contribution to one's own work. (Babbie and Mouton 2001). In this case, the researcher signed

a non-plagiarism form (Appendix D) to indicate that the work is her own and has acknowledged relevant authors whose work has been used in this report.

#### **1.9.4 Voluntary Participation**

A major tenet of social research is that participation must be voluntary. No one should be forced to participate and respondents should be made aware that they are free to withdraw at any stage of the process (De Vos 2005 *et al*). Prior to the interviews, the researcher informed the interviewees that participation was voluntary and not compulsory and if ever during the course of the interviews they felt uncomfortable they could leave. Fortunately none of them walked out of the interviews.

#### **1.10 Reflexivity**

Prior to going out to collect data the researcher had mixed emotions, these ranged from excitement to anxiety. The researcher was very excited about doing the study in her home country especially since it coincided with so many development challenges facing Zimbabwe and Southern Africa at the present moment. However, despite the excitement, the researcher was very nervous about the fact that she had to go and do her interviews within a short timeframe. Furthermore, the researcher was anxious about raising expectations and getting emotionally involved in the women's problems. This could have turned the interview into a counselling session. Being conscious of this risk helped the researcher keep the focus on the research. Through the study, the researcher gained insight into the social development issues facing women in Zimbabwe. Undertaking research at home was beneficial in that there were no language barriers, as we all spoke a common native language. Nevertheless, the researcher took care in ensuring that she did not allow personal bias to affect the research.

Every research has its limitations. Despite the fact that some things went extremely well the researcher encountered some setbacks. The reality of doing research work is that not all things turn out according to plan and therefore the researcher had to change some of her initial plans.

For example, the NGO that she had initially identified was no longer based in the village and as a result more time and resources were used to get to the head office. Furthermore, getting hold of the participants proved to be difficult and hard choices had to be made regarding information gathering.

### **1.11 Chapter Outline**

The structure of the research will be as follows:

#### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter contains the introduction to the study, statement of the problem, the context of the study, the rationale and significance of the study, the problem formulation in relation to the research questions and research objectives and clarification of concepts.

#### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The literature review is presented in this chapter. It examines literature from various authors based on the objectives of the study. This study is conceptually situated within the broad field of social development and informed by theories and practices related to this field. An overview of the nature and extent of development challenges facing rural women in Africa in general and particularly in Matabeleland South has been provided.

#### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodology of the study in relation to the research design, the sampling approach, data collection approach, data collection instrument, data analysis and the limitations to the study.

## **Chapter Four: Presentation and Analysis of Findings**

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the study. A framework for analysis that captures the findings has been provided. The format within which the analysis of the findings is made is based on the main objectives of and the questions addressed by the study.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter presents the conclusions emanating from the study. In addition, it provides both the recommendations coming from the participants of the study and the researcher. These recommendations are directed to the government and NGOs.

### **1.12 Conclusion**

This chapter gave an overview of the research problem, its context and the objectives of the study. Furthermore, key concepts used in the study were discussed and the main ethical considerations were highlighted. The researcher also clarified some reflexivity issues. The following section presents an outline of the research chapters.

The next chapter presents the literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This study is conceptually situated within the broad field of social development and informed by theories and practices related to this field. This chapter focuses on the conceptual framework that underpins this study with a focus on Sen's (1999) development as freedom, Korten's (1990) people centred development approach and Sen's (2000) approach to social exclusion. It will also provide an overview of the nature and extent of development challenges facing rural women in Africa in general and particularly in Matabeleland South.

#### **2.2 Development as Freedom**

Development has been taken to mean different things at different times, in different places, and by different people in different professions and organisations (Chambers 2005). Sen (1999) defines it as one of the freedoms that people should have. Freedoms may refer to social and economic arrangements such as facilities for education and health care as well as political and civil rights that include the liberty to participate in public discussions. The idea of unfreedom may be depicted by the lack of public facilities and social care, the absence of epidemiological programmes or of organised arrangements for health care or educational facilities as is often found in rural communities where women bear the brunt of this impact (Sen 1999). Thus freedoms encompass social, economic and political freedoms which should lead to improved quality of life for all through improved capabilities for people to live their lives as they wish (Sen 1999). Deprivation in one area may lead to deprivation in another and may result in people falling into the deprivation trap (Chambers 2005). Therefore, Sen's idea of development as freedom means that individuals should be able to choose between different opportunities, based on what it is that they have reason to value. Development policies should also create the institutional opportunities for them to do so by enhancing their human capabilities with a focus on what people are effectively able to do and be (Robeyns 2005). In



addition, Sen (1999) states that evaluations and policies should focus on people's quality of life, and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life that, upon reflection, they have reason to value. The capability approach evaluates policies according to their impact on people's capabilities. It asks whether people are healthy, and whether they have access to clean water, access to doctors, protection from diseases and basic knowledge on health issues. It also asks whether they have sufficient food supplies, food entitlements and whether they have access to a high-quality educational system, to real political participation and to community activities that support them to cope with their struggles in daily life (Sen 1999).

Development refers to processes and strategies through which societies and states seek to achieve more prosperous and equitable standards of living (Chambers 2005). This kind of development prioritises people as it puts them at the centre of the development agenda. People centred development could thus be achieved through promotion of people's capabilities which goes beyond a person's command over income. This is also linked to the notion of human development which is measured through the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI combines longevity, knowledge, and income (as measured by life expectancy, a combination of adult literacy and mean years of schooling, and income measured by average purchasing power, respectively) which are the means to achieving the aim of human development or enhancement of human capabilities (Mehrotra and Jolly 2000).

Thus, sustainable development should integrate qualitative and quantitative changes that empower poor people through enhanced capabilities to access civil and political liberties, participate in decision-making processes, and enjoy transparency guarantees and protective security (Mehrotra and Jolly 2000; Sen 1999). Chambers (2005) further asserts that the object of development is the experience of a good quality of life and well-being for all. These should lead to improved access to life enhancing resources such as education, health, decent employment, housing, water and sanitation, protection from harm and active participation in decision making processes for people to live the lives they want to live (Sen 1999; Chambers 2005). Thus, the ultimate objective of state action in all countries should be the enhancement of human capabilities (Mehrotra and Jolly 2000; Sen 1999). These capabilities consist of the

basic capacity to avoid ignorance, malnutrition, disease, and early mortality and lead a fuller, longer life and be able to participate in decision-making processes in their communities (Mehrotra and Jolly 2000). According to Chambers (2005:193), “capabilities refer to what people are capable of doing and being”. Development should therefore focus on improving the standard of living and quality of life of previously disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

This study adopts Sen’s (1999) meaning of development. Sen (1999) states that people have to recognise the role of freedoms of different kinds in countering afflictions. This includes individual agency which is a main factor in development. However, on the other hand the freedom of agency can be constrained by social, political and economic opportunities that may not be available. Expansion of freedom in this approach is viewed as both the primary end and as the principal means of development. Development, therefore is the removal of various types of unfreedom that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned opportunity. When we try to expand people’s real freedoms, we are directing our attention to the ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means that, *inter alia*, play a prominent part in the process” (Sen 1999:53).

According to Sen’s (1999) definition of development the focus shifts away from the attention of per capita GNP growth only, to a broader goal of expanding the freedoms that matter to people. Thus, for role players to effectively impact on the lives of the historically disadvantaged communities, focus should be on empowerment and sustainability. In this approach the communities should be seen as active participants in change, rather than as inactive and submissive recipients of distributed aid.

According to Sen (1999) social opportunities refer to the arrangements that society makes for education, health care and so on, which influence the individual’s substantive freedom to live a better life. These facilities are important not only for the conduct of private lives (such as living a healthy life and avoiding preventable morbidity and premature mortality), but also for more effective participation in economic and political activities. For example, illiteracy can be a major barrier to participation in economic activities that require production according to

specification or demand strict quality control. Thus according to Kanbur and Squire (2000), social opportunities or the lack thereof should change people's thinking about strategies for reducing poverty. As more aspects of poverty are explored, more policies become relevant to poverty eradication. Moving beyond income, to embrace health or education for example introduces a new set of policy instruments. For example, improved health increases income earning potential, increased education leads to better health outcomes, provision of safety nets allows the poor to take advantage of high return and high risk opportunities. Therefore, poverty reducing strategies must take note of the interconnectedness among policies (Kanbur and Squire 2000).

Transparency guarantees also deal with the need for openness that people can expect and the freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of disclosure and lucidity. When that trust is violated, the lives of many people – both direct parties and third parties – may be adversely affected by the lack of openness. Transparency guarantees (including the right to disclosure) can thus be an important category of instrumental freedom. These guarantees have a clear instrumental role in preventing corruption, financial irresponsibility and underhand dealings (Sen 1999).

–Finally, no matter how well an economic system operates, some people can be typically on the verge of vulnerability and can actually succumb to great deprivation as a result of material changes that adversely affect their lives. Protective security is needed to provide a social safety net for preventing the affected population from being reduced to abject misery, and in some cases even starvation and death. The domain of protective security includes fixed institutional arrangements such as unemployment benefits and statutory income supplements to the indigent as well as ad hoc arrangements such as famine relief or emergency public employment to generate income for destitutes,” (Sen 1999:56).

Thus for development to be exercised as a freedom, intended beneficiaries should be able to drive it and reap its benefits.

## 2.3 People Centred Development

Korten (1990), an advocate of People Centred Development (PCD), defines it as a process by which members of a society increase their personal institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations. Thus PCD is about people deciding for themselves what constitutes a better life. This approach puts people at the centre of development by insisting that development should firstly be for people by creating opportunities for everyone and secondly by people which implies that people should decide for themselves what constitutes a better life and be active participants of development initiatives. Furthermore, Korten (1990) points out that if an individual is unable to participate in the normal routine of his and her community, he or she could experience a poverty of life which might be equally as painful as physical deprivation.

People Centred Development is underpinned by four key principles. These are seen as the building blocks of development namely public participation, social learning, empowerment and sustainability. Public participation as an approach involves a two way interchange of decision-making, views and preferences. According to Swanepoel (1997), it is not consultation which involves a process of asking people's opinions such as through social surveys but it is participation in decision making, participation in the implementation of development programmes and projects, participation in the monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects and participation in sharing the benefits of development.

People centred development is also seen as the product of a social learning process, that is learning how to use oneself and one's environment to better meet one's needs and the needs of others. Freire (1972) refers to this as 'conscientisation' which is a critical awareness of one's potential to initiate and manage positive change for the benefit of one's self and others. People need to be empowered to take charge of their development. Empowerment should be defined in a way that takes power, and the distribution of power, into account (Swanepoel 1997). One can only talk empowerment if people have the capacity to participate and make informed decisions. Capacity building is linked to skills transferral. Empowerment is not

possible without capacity. Sustainable development which is also another principle of PCD can be defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It can therefore be termed development that can be sustained in the long run without adversely affecting the natural environment. According to Davids *et al* (2005), PCD accepts the connectedness of people with their environment.

According to Davids *et al* (2005), PCD further recognises that there are millions of people who live in poverty and who experience inequality. These people should be the focus of development action and intervention. The focus should not be on macro-economic statistics, such as an increase in per capita income, which often conceals the humanness, the need and distress of these millions of people. PCD moves the emphasis from macro-level quantitative approaches like economic modelling, technological transfers and the provision of infrastructure to qualitative micro-level approaches like community values and needs, local customs, public participation and indigenous people's knowledge. As a result, development is not just about creating infrastructure for the poor but it is about their needs, values, customs and their understanding of their circumstances (Davids *et al* 2005).

A definition of development should be woven around people, their diverse needs, changing circumstances, customs, values and knowledge systems. Development should eradicate poverty, discrimination and environmental degradation through fostering just relationships in and between poor people and non-poor societies on a global scale (Davids *et al* 2005).

It should be noted that PCD involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within society. These changes must come from within the individuals and groups, and cannot be imposed from the outside (Burkey 1993).

It is clear that Sen's (1999) notion of development as freedom is related to Korten's (1990) notion of people centred development. Both authors acknowledge the important role played by the intended beneficiaries in development.

## 2.4 Social Exclusion

With the decline of the socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe there is growing social exclusion. Social Exclusion can be defined as the process through which individuals are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in a society in which they live (Davids *et al* 2005). Haralambos (2002) states that individuals or groups are socially excluded if they are denied the opportunity of participation, whether they actually desire to or not. It is not just individual choices or circumstances which shape the chances of social exclusion, but also national policies and local policies, therefore while new policies can be considered to solve social problems like, gender discrimination and youth unemployment people should note that past and existing policies are the causes of the problems (Gil 1992).

According to Sen (2000), social exclusion and discrimination refer to the process and outcome of keeping a social group outside the power centres and resources and it is a powerful form of discriminatory practice. In the course of human development, exclusion has taken the form of segregating a group of people from the social, political, economic, cultural, educational and religious domains of societal life. This process usually culminates into a system of domination and subjugation (Sen 2000).

Once again it needs to be reiterated that the very structure of society, economy and polity is built on exclusion. In this social structure, various social groups are excluded on the basis of caste, class, gender, disabilities, ethnicity, age and location. They are excluded from opportunities, outcome of development, freedom of mobility, resources, and citizenship in polity and membership in society (Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) 2007).

In rural areas, especially in an African context, social exclusion leads to poverty and health challenges which are a direct result of inadequate food, poor sanitation and limited access to medical facilities. Social exclusion has also been identified as one of the major drivers of migration as the poor and marginalised search for better opportunities or access to basic services like food, medical facilities, water and employment. In Zimbabwe, this process has

been noted as increasing the numbers of Zimbabweans that have migrated to South Africa and other neighbouring countries in search of employment and security.

Social exclusion is seen as a denial of entitlements and as exclusion from capabilities. Capabilities are absolute requirements for full membership of society and entitlements refer to rights, that is, the command the families have over goods, using various economic, political and social opportunities within the legal system (Sen 2000). PACS (2007) further state that women in Africa are the most socially excluded and discriminated segment of the population. Patriarchy is at the core of the structural arrangement that discriminate against women. Patriarchy constrains women in all facets of life. Control of women's reproductive abilities and sexuality is placed in men's hands. Patriarchy limits women's ownership and control of property and other economic resources, including the products of their own labour. Women's mobility is constrained, and their access to education and information hindered. Over the years, it has been recognised that the experiences of the majority of women are grounded in both poverty and patriarchy. Both these feed into each other and subject women to exclusion and exploitation (PACS 2007). In Zimbabwe, politics, poverty and patriarchy intersect to marginalise women in destructive ways and rural women are the most socially excluded.

## **2.5 African Women and Development**

Women, especially those in Africa, carry the burden of development challenges. They are less well-nourished than men, less healthy and more vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse. They are much less likely than men to be literate and should they attempt to enter the work place they are faced with massive obstacles, including intimidation from family or spouse and gender discrimination in employment. Burdened often with both daily work as well as full responsibility for housework and child care, they lack opportunities for play and for the cultivation of their imaginative and cognitive faculties (Nussbaum 2000).

Nussbaum (2000) further asserts that in essence women are not treated as individuals in their own right, or as persons with a dignity that deserves respect from laws and institutions but are treated as reproducers, caregivers and sexual outlets. Women's fundamental contributions in

their households, food production systems and national economies are increasingly acknowledged, within Africa and by the international community. Manuh (1998) says that this is due, in no small part, to African women's own energetic efforts to organise, articulate their concerns and make their voices heard. At both grassroots and national levels, more women's associations were formed during the 1990s to take advantage of the new political opportunities allowing them to assert their leadership roles. Mungwini (2007) states that women are also pressing for an expansion of women's economic and social opportunities. By improving their own positions, they are simultaneously strengthening African society as a whole, as well as enhancing the continent's broader development prospects.

Nevertheless, women in Africa, especially rural women, continue to face enormous obstacles. Manuh (1998) and Mungwini (2007) assert that the growing recognition of their contributions has not translated into significantly improved access to resources or increased decision-making powers. The dynamism that women display in the economic, cultural and social lives of their communities through their associations and informal networks have not been channeled into creating new models of participation and leadership. Thus more grassroots organisation as well as across country networking is needed. Manuh (1998) highlights that against this background; over 3 000 women converged on Dakar in 1994 to attend the African Women's Preparatory Conference. They came to articulate an African position for the Beijing Fourth Women's World Conference. The resulting African Platform for Action identified several priorities. These included combating the increasing poverty of African women; improving women's access to education and health services, with a special focus on reproductive health; addressing women's relationship to the environment; increasing the involvement of women in the peace process; advancing the legal and human rights of women; highlighting the special concerns of the girl-child; and "mainstreaming" gender concerns within economic and development policy-making by disaggregating data along gender lines.

Mungwini (2007) states that since 1980 the government has been committed to changing the plight of women in Zimbabwe. By the same token, Batezat and Mwalo (1989) indicate that at independence, Zimbabwean women were for the first time in the history of the country officially recognised as an oppressed group and as such were the target of conscious



government policy to change their situation. The government wanted to transform the status of women so that they could assume their rightful position in society and work alongside their male counterparts in the development of the nation.

Mungwini (2007) states that to achieve this goal a number of initiatives were undertaken that ranged from landmark legal reforms that were meant to safeguard the rights of women such as the landmark Legal Age of Majority Act of 1982 which helped empower the Zimbabwean youth and women to determine and shape their future. Since then legal reforms have continued with the enactment of several laws, the most recent being the much publicised Domestic Violence Bill of 2006 which has now become law. Tichagwa (1998) adds that as soon as Zimbabwe became a member of both the United Nations and the African Union, the government ratified a number of regional and international instruments and protocols that had a strong bearing on the status of women in the country. Furthermore, according to Mungwini (2007), the government has always had a ministry to deal with issues of gender and women's affairs, which demonstrates its commitment to the upliftment of women. However, the political climate in Zimbabwe has not been conducive to implementing any of these positive policies and whatever gains that have been made at the policy level have been stymied by the politics of the day.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM 2000) agrees that such declarations have been able to increase an awareness and understanding of the problems facing women and their needs, but they have not yet resulted in significant development priorities for rural women. The Hunger Project (2000) further asserts that not much has been done to practically improve the quality of life of women, especially African rural women. Government policies have not been able to comprehensively alleviate the plight of these women. Furthermore, Manuh (1998) asserts that there has been insufficient political will and sustained commitment to meeting the needs and interests of women by local authorities and governments. The Hunger Project (2000) also states that while many countries have ratified UN agreements such as the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which guarantees women equal rights and protection from discrimination, these have not translated into better living and working conditions for women. This hampers

Africa's development by excluding the perspectives, skills and dynamism of half the population. Without meaningful commitment in the form of policy changes and more importantly implementation strategies, African women will continue to be marginalised.

According to Meer (1998), there is substantial evidence that rural women are mostly neglected, and consistently marginalised. The focus on rural women in this study is a concern. Rural women have a certain consciousness about their position as rural women but are affected by the lack of political will (McIntosh and Friedman 1989, Kongolo and Bamgose 2002).

This research seeks to explore the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South in Zimbabwe, in relation to poverty, food insecurity, access to water, health and education services and the effects of climate change. The aim is to provide an overview of some development challenges that these women face and to stimulate anew the policy debates in this area as well as the need for urgent implementation strategies.

## **2.6 Rural Women and Climate Change**

*“Climate change presents the most serious threat to development and could potentially reverse many of the gains that have been made.”* (Department for International Development (DFID) 2007: 32).

It is widely recognised that climate change aggravates existing inequalities in the key dimensions that are not only the building blocks of livelihoods, but are also crucial for coping with change, such as: wealth; access to and understanding of technologies; education; access to information; and access to resources (Institute of Development Studies 2008). Those who are already the most vulnerable and marginalised are in the greatest need of adaptation strategies in the face of shifts in weather patterns and resulting environmental phenomena. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2007) states that women suffer most from the impacts of climate change largely due to their limited adaptive capacities which are a

result of social inequalities and social and economic roles that manifest in differences in access to information, lack of employment and unequal access to resources.

The roles that most women in rural areas are expected to take are often supportive and reproductive, centred on the home and local community rather than the public sphere. This means that despite the central roles they play in agricultural production or other activities fundamental to sustainable livelihoods and national economies they are generally invisible and lack public recognition. Predominantly poor rural women are expected to assume primary responsibility for their families' subsistence (Institute of Development Studies 2008; IPCC 2007). The expectation that girls will help their mothers with household tasks and with caring for younger siblings means that they are more likely to be excluded from opportunities to gain an education than boys, although these gaps are gradually closing. Women earning a wage often earn less than men, leaving them more vulnerable to changes in their working environment caused by external phenomena, including climate change (Institute of Development Studies 2008).

The Institute of Development Studies (2008) further asserts that women and girls, especially African women are generally expected to care for the sick, particularly in times of disaster and environmental stress. Women have less time to generate income but still have to pay rising medical costs for their family meaning they remain poor. It also means they are less able to contribute to community-level decision-making processes on climate change or disaster risk reduction. In addition, being faced with the burden of caring for dependents while being obliged to travel further for water or firewood makes women and girls prone to stress-related illnesses and exhaustion. Women and girls are unable to access health care services because they cannot afford to pay and unable to travel extensively due to cultural restrictions (Institute of Development Studies 2008).

Climate change scenarios predict adverse environmental and socio-economic consequences including frequency and intensity of heat waves, droughts, floods, and typhoons; altered ecosystems; water shortages; desertification; soil erosion; erratic rain fall; and severe cyclones, hurricanes and floods reduced output and productivity of the agriculture, fishery and forestry

sectors, loss of livelihood, food insecurity and diminished supplies; and heightened incidence of certain diseases and pests on people, animals and plants (Yocogan-Diano and Kashiwazaki 2009; United Nations (UN) 2009).

According to IPCC (2007) changes in the climate over time, including regional or global temperature changes and the increased prevalence of extreme weather conditions all impact heavily on areas of dire need. The brunt of these will be borne by poor rural women and their communities who are most dependent on the land and natural resources for their food, livelihood, fuel and medicine yet less equipped to cope with natural disasters and weather variations. Women are particularly affected because of socially ascribed roles resulting from entrenched feudal-patriarchal discrimination patterns (IPCC 2007). Climate change is compounding an already existing and deepening agrarian crisis linked to land concentration in the hands of landlords, rural underdevelopment, liberalisation of agriculture and land conversion policies causing indebtedness and bankruptcy among peasant families. This situation forces women to migrate and find economic opportunities in other countries or resorting to other measures which places them further at risk (Yocogan-Diano and Kashiwazaki 2009).

Women and girls living in areas affected by desertification and deforestation have to walk longer to collect water and firewood, which further limits the time they can devote to school or income-generating activities (UN 2009). The IPCC (2007) reports that the world is already seeing the impact of climate change on food production patterns. Poor areas of the world will become poorer through the lack of rainfall. Women will be hardest hit since the bulk of food production lie in their hands. It is also predicted that water and food will become increasingly scarce resources.

Rural women suffer more from natural disasters, such as floods, fires, and mudslides, than men. In a study of 141 countries where the status of women was low, natural disasters killed more women than men, both directly and indirectly. Other research provides evidence that there are frequently higher female casualties during floods because women have not been taught how to swim (IPCC 2007). Climate change is often viewed as a “threat multiplier”,

exacerbating threats caused by persistent poverty, weak institutions for resource management and conflict resolution, fault lines and a history of mistrust between communities and nations, and inadequate access to information or resources (Toulmin 2009).

Climate change will impact on every aspect of society for example human security, health, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), sustainable livelihoods, food security, water and the economy among others. The negative effects on agriculture and national food security will be particularly acute in some areas and there will be changes in the current patterns of food production and trade. This will affect both rural producers and urban consumers and will drive both rural-urban, as well as international, migration patterns (Global Water Partnership (GWP) 2009). Agriculture is the nexus where food security and climate meet. It is almost inevitable that its vulnerability will impede progress towards the achievement of the MDG 1 which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the target being to reduce by half, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015 ( UNDP 2004).

Toulmin (2009) adds that women do not have secure, affordable access to and control over land, water, livestock and trees. They are forced to make do with limited resources and alternatives when their subsistence needs and livelihoods are threatened. Elderly women, disabled women, widows and indigenous women often face the most acute challenges related to climate change but have fewer resources to compensate for and adjust to changes (Toulmin 2009). According to the UN (2009) Sub-Saharan Africa is set to be one of the regions hardest hit by climate change, partly because 96 percent of its population is dependent on rain-fed agriculture and partly because of Africa's poor adaptive capacity, relating to historical backlogs of under-development. Examples are poor access to health services, lack of availability of micro-finance, and under-developed infrastructure and transport systems.

## **2.7 Women, Water, and Development**

This section focuses on the relationship between women, water and development.

Climate change will exacerbate an already stressed situation. It is estimated that by 2025 approximately two thirds of the world's population will face some kind of water stress, and for one billion of them the shortage will be severe and socially unsettling (IPCC 2007). The gendered dimensions of water use and management are fairly well-documented. It has long been noted in the gender and water literature, for example, that women and girls generally assume primary responsibility for collecting water for drinking, cooking, washing, hygiene and raising small livestock. This is not new knowledge, but it does take on an extreme significance in the context of climate change. Climate change may also lead to increasing frequency and intensity of floods and deteriorating water quality. As a result in most areas that are vulnerable to drought and desertification, time spent on water collection will increase as women and girls will have to travel longer distances to find water (Institute of Development Studies 2008; IPCC 2007).

Water is linked to many other topical issues in Africa (such as health, unemployment, housing, urbanisation and poverty), but it is often not explicitly addressed. In the development context, water and its effective management is essential to the development of a number of the MDGs and poverty reduction generally (GWP 2009). Without water security, there will be no food security, energy security will be compromised and poverty reduction and economic growth will not be sustainable. Making the world water-secure means tackling the destructive effects of water – the damage caused by floods, droughts, landslides, erosion, pollution and water-borne diseases. It also means addressing the negative results of poor management, and this will become more challenging as climatic variability increases (GWP 2009). It is also a critical factor in promoting and sustaining economic development. Effective water resource management is therefore critical in promoting water security, human health, food security, energy and resilient natural systems (GWP 2009).

Water insufficiency is one of the most crucial issues facing humanity and in particular rural women. Adequate water is necessary for adequate human health and is a prerequisite for poverty reduction (Toulmin 2009). Nevertheless, water quality and accessibility are extremely inconsistent around the world. Naturally, the most extreme shortages are experienced by those least able to cope with them; the most impoverished inhabitants of developing countries

(Toulmin 2009). In developing countries, water used to grow the food needed constitutes 70 to 90 percent of the total national use. To meet the needs of a growing population more food must be produced while using less water (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) 2007).

Agriculture remains the predominant water user, but the linkage between water, agriculture and livelihoods is more complex than water scarcity increases poverty. Water supports livelihoods of all people through water-consuming agricultural and industrial activities, through consumption and sanitation and through environmental services (GWP 2009). It is central to Africa's development challenges. Whether it is food security, poverty reduction, economic growth, energy production or human health, water is the nexus (GWP 2009). Water is the key to Africa's ability to cope with climate change. Floods, droughts and chronic water scarcity all pose serious threats to development and economic growth. Africa's natural climatic variability has frequently impacted severely upon the economies of flood-hit or drought stricken countries. Water security provides the basis upon which people can build for the future (Toulmin 2009).

GWP (2009) states that water use and water management have been recognized as central to sustainability. In 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders committed themselves to a collaborative programme of sustainable development, greater gender equality, and increased access to health and education through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Greater access for both women and men to water and sanitation is key to achieving each of the eight goals. Of special interest to this review is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and to ensure environmental sustainability. International agencies have thus made water for women a cornerstone of their development and humanitarian efforts, but much debate surrounds the nature and consequences of their policies (GWP 2009). Cutting in half the proportion of the world's population which do not have access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitation is not only one of the eighteen targets embedded in the MDGs, but also a critical factor for meeting all the goals, including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting

gender equality and women's empowerment; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating major diseases; and improving environmental sustainability (UNDP 2004).

The UNDP (2004) asserts that access to clean water and sanitation services is also critical to other facets of sustainable development, from environmental protection and food security to increased tourism and investment, from the empowerment of women and the education of girls to reductions in productivity losses due to morbidity and malnutrition. In addition, sufficient water for washing and safe, private sanitation facilities are central to the basic rights of every human being to personal dignity and self-respect. It is therefore imperative that policies and programmes draw on the existing body of knowledge on gender and water to inform interventions. There is evidence that simple strategies work. For example, providing local water sources frees up time for women to engage in income-generation by reducing the time required to fetch water thereby speeding up domestic tasks (UNDP 2004).

Participatory research with local communities on the benefits that the provision of local water sources could bring would provide enough convincing evidence to justify the infrastructural costs involved. Equally, efforts are urgently needed to better highlight actual and potential risks of attack on women and girls who are obliged to walk long distances, and produce strategies to offset these dangers, such as community policing of water routes (Institute of Development Studies 2008).

## **2.8 Rural Women and Food Insecurity**

Many countries face food insecurity due to persistent droughts, floods and a failure to adopt appropriate technologies to improve agricultural productivity (FAO 2003). Climate change and the global economic recession have exacerbated food insecurity. Droughts, floods, poverty and unemployment result in high levels of uncertainty and anxiety about where the next meal is going to come from (Maringira and Surtherland 2010). In instances like these women are the worst affected. Studies have shown that women are the most vulnerable to food insecurity because of the fundamental role they play in agriculture and rural development, (Institute of



Development Studies 2008). Women have the major task of feeding their families meaning food scarcity usually becomes a “woman’s issue”.

Although rural women and men play complementary roles in guaranteeing food security, women tend to play a greater role in natural resource management and ensuring nutrition (FAO 2003). Women often grow, process, manage and market food and other natural resources, and are responsible for raising small livestock, managing vegetable gardens and collecting fuel and water (FAO 2003). For example, in Southeast Asia, women provide up to 90 percent of labour for rice cultivation and in Sub-Saharan Africa they are responsible for 80 percent of food production. However, statutory and/or customary laws often restrict women’s property and land rights and make it difficult for them to access credit and agricultural extension services, while also reducing their incentive to engage in environmentally sustainable farming practices and make long-term investments in land rehabilitation and soil quality (Institute of Development Studies 2008).

Rural women are the backbone of agriculture and some of them farm their crops for family consumption. However, the majority of rural women work as “invisible” field hands on family plots. They carry out essential work such as hoeing, planting, weeding and harvesting with simple tools and little outside assistance. This often means that women have not been accorded an independent status as farmers and their work is considered as secondary within both the family and society (UN 2009). Many of the tasks which rural women perform, though indispensable, are difficult to quantify, such as clearing land and sowing seeds, gathering wild plants for food and medicine, fetching water and wood, and keeping small livestock for household use. This, combined with deeply ingrained societal biases which place little value on women’s work, can render the contributions of rural women virtually invisible (Sheykhi 2009).

Zimbabwean women play a critical role in and outside their homes, with some even heading their households as breadwinners but have no claim to land or power to influence land issues. Women are expected to feed their families yet the government seems unwilling to provide them with the means to do so, namely free and fair food aid and access to land (Mungwini

2007). Women's active involvement in agriculture usually translates into a heavy workload. Poor rural women can work as many as 16 to 18 hours per day, doing fieldwork as well as handling all their domestic responsibilities. This heavy workload can have a negative effect not only on women's own health but on family nutrition as well (FAO 2007; UN 2009).

Poor rural women are expected to work in their fields, which are often distant from their homes, collect water and wood, prepare meals and care for the sick and the elderly (UN 2009). Women have no choice but to cut back on prepared meals which have a negative impact on children's nutrition and the overall food security of the household (UN 2009).

Rural women generally bear primary responsibility for the nutrition of their children, from gestation through weaning and throughout the critical period of growth. They are the major forces behind food production (Institute of Development Studies 2008; Budlender 1992). However, regardless of their contributions to food security, they tend to be invisible actors in development. All too often, their work is not recorded in statistics or mentioned in reports and as a result, their contribution is poorly understood and often underestimated. However, despite the obvious role that they play they still face marginalisation and oppression due to gendered notions and politics (Institute of Development Studies 2008). Patriarchy contributes to the double burden they have to bear - that of not only being poor but also being women.

Food insecurity may lead to labour migration for the males, which often means women at home end up with an increased number of tasks as they must now do the work for which the migrant males were responsible for. When the men stay away, the increased burden on women could result in reduced agricultural productivity. This could lead to vicious cycles in which reduced productivity leads to food deficits and reduced income (Institute of Development Studies 2008). This in turn could lead to a reinforcement of the male labour migration as part of the solution to the household's needs for food and cash income. In the absence of males due to migration women have faced abundant food production and access problems, and have thus started resorting to informal trade and risky behaviours such as prostitution for food (Maringira and Sutherland 2010; Mungwini 2007). Food insecurity has exacerbated women's vulnerability. A study conducted by Nyangairi (2010) found that women use their agency to

navigate the given set of circumstances in which they find themselves in. Nyangairi (2010) further states that some Zimbabwean women may cross the border to do sex work. The women then remit their earnings to their families back in Zimbabwe.

Maringira and Sutherland (2010) state that rural women in Zimbabwe struggle to produce enough food for national consumption because of the partisan distribution of farming inputs. Owing to rural locality, poverty and climate change, Zimbabwean women often resort to subsistence farming and their food insecurities are therefore relative to food production. Furthermore, the politicisation of landownership and food aid by the government and NGOs alike have been a major cause of women's struggle to produce enough food for their households.

Moreover, according to Maringira and Sutherland (2010) the distribution of food aid is a political task and recipients of aid are determined along partisan lines. Rural women who do not support certain politicians then need to seek out extra-marital affairs with, and/or perform sexual favours for either the headman or food aid distributors, increasing the prevalence of HIV and AIDS amongst Zimbabweans.

According to Maringira and Sutherland (2010), the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe embarked on a five year policy in 2008 to distribute tractors and other heavy farming equipments on credit and with zero deposit in an effort to empower 'new' farmers. It is striking that the same government which has reserved a quota for women in parliament did not implement the same quota in its five-year agricultural plan, considering that so many women are trying to survive by farming. Interestingly, women in parliament benefited most from the equipment, while women in the rural areas remained neglected and impoverished. In addition, farming inputs such as seed and fertiliser were not distributed to every woman in the rural areas; instead the elite group in power had access to these seeds and fertiliser and were able to hoard them. They reportedly proceeded to resell them at exorbitant prices beyond the reach of many. The voice of rural women could furthermore not be heard in the media or in speeches made at any national conferences. Where rural women were mentioned, their experiences of food

insecurity were distorted to suit the government campaigns (Maringira and Sutherland 2010; Gaidzanwa 2004).

Poverty alleviating strategies have not reduced the poor women's burden. Instead they have also contributed to their vulnerability. Poor rural women are viewed as the recipients of development, instead of active participants.

## **2.9 Rural Women and Poverty**

Poor people have their own understanding and interpretation of their social reality that is different to the onlooker's perception. For poor rural women, poverty is a multi-faceted reality consisting of inter alia, lack of power, income and resources to make choices and take advantage of opportunities (Davids *et al* 2005). According to Farber (2009), when analysts refer to the 'inter-generational aspect or legacy of poverty', they are referring to the fact that growing up in a household of poverty often binds people into the same state of existence for their own lives. For example, poverty in childhood can result in malnutrition, which restricts one's ability to fully develop mentally or physically and which therefore lessens one's ability to perform in school. Lack of access to social networks means that the poor do not hear about jobs other people get through word of mouth, or family, or other networks. These are just some of the ways in which people not only live in poverty, but get 'stuck' in poverty as a self-perpetuating cycle (Farber, 2009). For most poor households, poverty has become a vicious cycle which is hard to escape, and then it extends to incorporate their children, who ultimately become the next generation of Africa's poor (Davids *et al* 2005).

Poverty at its most extreme threatens human survival but for people living in poverty, it is a multi-dimensional experience that encompasses a range of factors including, but not limited to, survival. UNDP (2004)'s Human Poverty Index is a composite of indicators of basic dimensions of deprivation: a short life (measured by the percentage of people expected to die before 40), lack of basic education (measured by literacy rates), and lack of access to public and private resources (measured by access to health services and clean water and percentage of malnourished children under five). Poverty encompasses the lack of income, household and

productive assets, entitlements, clean and fresh water, unpolluted air, social connections and support networks, personal security (including increased exposure to violence), and empowerment to participate in the political process and in decisions that influence one's life (Swanepoel 1997; UNDP 2004; Burkey 1993). Some aspects of poverty include the humiliation and stigma that tragically accompany poverty's material deprivations in all corners of the world (UNDP 2004).

The MDGs mirror the multiple dimensions of poverty. The goals include the promotion of gender equality and empowerment in recognition of the impact poverty on the already burdened women. Four indicators – relating to education, literacy, wage employment and political representation – are used to monitor progress (IFAD 2003). IFAD (2003) states that rural poverty is deeply rooted in the glaring imbalance between what women do and what they have. These persistent inequalities affect their ability to carry out their critical roles effectively, thus undermining global human and economic growth. Progress in achieving the MDGs will require greater investments and more-focused efforts to redress gender inequalities and improve the social and economic status, and the political participation and representation of rural poor women.

Currently above 51 percent of the world lives in rural areas (World Bank 2007), with Africa having the largest population of rural dwellers. Most of these rural areas do not have access to basic services hence agriculture is often the dominant activity. Opportunities for resource mobilisation are limited for people living in rural areas posing challenges to development (Sheykhi 2009). Often, the geographical location of rural areas increases the cost and difficulty of providing goods and services in a satisfactory manner. This results in fewer prospects in those locations (Chambers, 1983). Rural communities are rarely able to mobilise sufficient resources to finance their own development programmes, leaving them dependent on transfers from external resources. Furthermore, most of the rural areas in the developing countries are often politically marginalised; leaving little opportunity for the poor to influence government policies (Sheykhi 2009). This is precisely the situation of rural women in Matabeleland South.

Women in rural areas are hardest hit by poverty (Goldstein, 1983) and in many cases children from such backgrounds live in families or households with an income below the minimum subsistence level. Such households usually have low levels of literacy and education; have difficult and time-consuming access to water, fuel and other services (Goldstein 1983; Sheykhi 2009).

Scores of families in rural areas in third world countries are marginalised, with meagre incomes and dependent mostly on their crops. Wages in the agricultural sector fall well below the minimum living level, and the seasonal workers have the added disadvantage of earning a lot less than the permanent workers, (Sheykhi 2009). While poverty is evident in many urban areas in developing countries it is much harsher in rural areas. Jaizairy (1992) indicate that poverty is widespread among the poor households in the Third World, and manifests itself in malnutrition, lack of education, hunger and disease. The groups most affected are the landless, the near-landless, female-headed households and children.

Women comprise more than half of the world's population. Yet, despite momentous strides towards empowerment over the past half century, it is still an unequal world for women, in which "the doors to economic opportunity are barely ajar", according to United Nations' (2000) report. The World Bank (2007) declares that discriminatory traditions are one reason women bear the brunt of poverty's burden, especially in rural areas, where women's access to health and education and to such productive resources as capital, technology and land is severely limited. As a result, poverty remains stubbornly "feminised", with women accounting for a vast percentage of the world's absolute poor. In rural areas alone, more than 550 million women (over 50 percent of the world's rural population) live below the poverty line.

Rural women are predominantly susceptible to poverty (Kevane 2004). The United Nations (2000) states that the poor in developing countries live in rural areas without access to basic resources. While women work the land, they often do not hold formal and clear land titles. Less than two percent of land in the developing world is owned by women. This lack of rights over land makes women extremely vulnerable to eviction and negatively affects their economic options (United Nations 2000). Women's access to credit is also limited because

land is the major asset used as collateral to obtain loans. Women have to rely heavily on the unregulated, informal sector to meet their needs, and often pay higher interest rates as a result. While limited access to land and credit affects rural women as a whole, some groups are particularly vulnerable and marginalised, such as widows, indigenous women and women heading households (Sheykhi 2009). This is a growing category due to male out-migration (United Nations 2000).

One of the characteristics of poverty is illiteracy which often is the effect or result of poverty (lack of money to attend school). But it is equally possible for illiteracy to further cause or at least exacerbates poverty (Kevane 2004). This could happen in instances where an illiterate adult does not have access to written sources that will give him or her information on how to better use the environment to his or her advantage (Nussbaum and Glover 2001). Poor people find themselves in what Chambers (1983) calls the deprivation trap. According to Chambers (1983) many households in rural areas are trapped in a situation of poverty from which it is difficult to escape.

Chambers (1983) says that the poverty situation of rural households has many side effects also known as “clusters of disadvantage”. These clusters constantly interact with one another, and this interaction is what leads to the deprivation trap. These clusters, according to Chambers (1983), are the physical weakness of the household, where there is a high ratio of dependants to able bodied adults. Often women are left to head the house under unfavourable conditions. These households are usually isolated from the outside world, are far from the nearest town and shops and have basic transport facilities. Furthermore the rural households and communities are very vulnerable, with few safeguards against droughts, floods, fire and accidents. Kevane (2004) indicates that the rural poor women struggle to survive in these conditions. Furthermore, rural households are ignorant of their rights and of the law making them an easy target for exploitation.

Linked to poverty is the issue of access to health and education facilities for the rural poor which will be discussed in the next section.

## **2.10 Rural Women's Access to Education and Health Services**

MDGs recognise education as an empowerment tool for women. According to IFAD (2003), eliminating gender disparities in education is prioritised because the latter is seen not only as an instrument of empowerment, but also as an indication of the value society assigns to women. As women's status increases, so do the benefits to society. Studies have shown, for instance, that the major contributing factor to improved child nutrition is women's socio-economic status, particularly their educational levels. In addition, the countries that have closed the gender gap in education have experienced the fastest economic growth (IFAD 2003). Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam (2003) further state that education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the productive capacities of the labour force. According to the United Nations Population Fund, countries that have made social investments in health, family planning, and education have slower population growth and faster economic growth than countries that have not made such investments (Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam 2003). Other studies have concluded that when women farmers have direct access to knowledge and technologies, crop yields increase significantly. A specific project with a focus on gender could increase agricultural productivity and output by more than 20 percent. Data also reveal that HIV infection rates are higher where gender gaps in literacy are larger (IFAD 2003; Kanbur and Squire 2000).

In some countries, access to the secondary and higher education which helps create a skilled and knowledgeable labour force continues to be limited and the quality of the education is often low (Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam 2003). In developing countries, 25 percent of rural children do not attend primary school, compared to 16 percent of urban children. Access to education is also imbalanced in favour of boys with 69 percent of rural girls attending primary school compared to 73 percent of rural boys (World Bank 2007). The gender disproportion is to a certain extent due to the fact that girls are heavily relied upon for housework and child care. Nussbaum (2000) adds that factors that account for girls' unequal access to education in rural areas include a lack of a safe means of transportation, poor security in schools, and the lack of separate sanitation facilities.



A wide range of power imbalances and inequalities between men and women operate in many ways and many a time they reinforce each other. Women have far less access to education and information than men. According to global studies, only 58 percent of women in developing countries can read and write, compared with 79 percent of men (United Nations 2000).

With regards to health, HIV/AIDS is a growing problem among men and women in Africa. The issue of HIV/AIDS has exacerbated the situation of rural women. According to FAO (2010), Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 67 percent of people with HIV and for 75 percent of AIDS related deaths. Countries especially affected include: South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Women account for nearly 60 percent of HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa. FAO (2010) further states that while early outbreaks of the disease were predominantly in urban areas, the majority of people living with HIV/AIDS are now in rural areas. This is a result of returning male migrants who contracted AIDS and then return to their families. HIV/AIDS affects rural households in multiple ways. Many rural households appear to experience labour shortages for farm work, with serious implications for agricultural production and food security. HIV/AIDS also has significant indirect effects on rural employment through restrictions on female labour availability, as women's productive time is diverted to taking care of the sick (FAO 2010). Rural women have contracted AIDS from their partners who returned home while some of them have exposed themselves to the risk of AIDS through sex work.

Furthermore, rural women are also at a disadvantage when it comes to health issues. For instance, in many countries, reproductive health care remains inadequate, and maternal mortality continues to be high, with the highest rates in Sub-Saharan Africa. In every region of the world, the presence of skilled birth attendants is lower in rural than in urban areas (UN 2009).

The UN (2009) further contends that most pregnant women in rural areas continue to work while pregnant and resume work soon after delivery. Moreover, the absence of timely medical care, inadequate diet and heavy workload often results in complicated pregnancies and high maternal mortality rates.

Access to education and health facilities is crucial to improving communities' economic and social development. It is not enough to make education and access health facilities more widely available without improving their quality.

## **2.11 Conclusion**

It is clear that rural women face immense development challenges in relation to food security, poverty, and access to water, education and health facilities. The impact of climate change as well as the socio economic political instability of their broader context further exacerbates their capacity to meet these development challenges. The next chapter will present the methodological considerations that underpin this research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section will discuss the methodology in relation to the research design, the sampling approach, data collection approach, data collection instrument, data analysis and the limitations to the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is a strategic framework for undertaking research and it is marked by logical coherence along four dimensions which are purpose, paradigm, context and techniques (Brewerton and Millward 2001). A qualitative approach is adopted when exploring the perceptions of respondents about a particular topic. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), qualitative research attempts to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. They state that this design seeks to understand social action in terms of its specific context rather than attempting to generalise to some theoretical population. It also allows the researcher to satisfy his/her curiosity and desire for better understanding and develop new hypotheses about existing phenomena. The approach is typical when a researcher examines a new phenomenon or when the subject of study itself is relatively new (Babbie and Mouton 2001). Furthermore, according to Neuman (2000: 510), the exploratory nature of the study allows the researcher to research ~~into~~ an area that has not been studied and in which the researcher wants to develop initial ideas and a more focused research question.”

This research used an exploratory qualitative approach. Such a qualitative design is appropriate for understanding the perceptions of rural women’s development challenges. The

study aims to give a voice to the rural women to express how they view the development challenges they face. The qualitative approach is seen as empowering since it allows the women of Matabeleland who have experienced marginalisation and exclusion to have a 'voice'.

In addition, this research has facets of a case study approach. Zimbabwe is fraught with development challenges and the case study permitted the researcher to focus on the experiences of women in one village from a development lens. The findings from the study could give one a better understanding of the plight of the rural women in similar villages in Zimbabwe despite the fact that the research focused on one rural village.

### **3.3 Sampling**

Sampling is the selection of research participants from an entire population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours, and or social processes to observe. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), the aim is to select a sample that will be representative of the population about which the researcher aims to draw conclusions. However, some samples need not be generalised to the broader population. Purposive non-probability sampling was used in this research. De Vos (2002) says that this type of non-probability sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher in that the sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population.

#### **3.3.1 Sample Focus: The Context**

The researcher was interested in locating a village in a district that was most challenged by various development deficits (lack of water, food shortages, lack of education, lack of health facilities). Particularly the research focused on the experiences of rural women about the various development challenges they face. In consultation with key informants, Sababa village

was targeted. Sababa village is in the Insiza district. The main sources of livelihood are agricultural farming, vegetable gardens, stokvels and Mopani worms.

### **3.3.2 The Respondents**

All respondents were purposively selected. With the permission of the village chief, 20 rural women were selected.

- Fourteen formed part of a focus group in Sababa.
- Six were individually interviewed (in-depth interviews).
- Four comprised of commuting traders (in-depth individual interviews).

Eight key informants were also interviewed (in-depth) namely:

- Chief.
- Acting Chief.
- Governor and Resident Minister of Matabeleland South.
- Provincial Administrator of Matabeleland South.
- NGO Field Coordinator.
- NGO Committee Member.
- Editor in Chief.
- Senior Journalist.

Thus there was one focus group of fourteen rural women from the Sababa village; six individual interviews with rural women from Sababa and four individual interviews with women commuting from Zimbabwe to South Africa. In addition, eight key informants were individually interviewed. In total, twenty-four rural women plus eight key informants were interviewed. This adds up to thirty-two respondents.

### 3.4 Data Collection Approach

Qualitative researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world and want to study them in their natural setting (Durrheim 2006). Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were relied on as data collection strategies.

One focus group included fourteen women who met for two hours. According to the Health Communication Group (2002), focus group discussions are a method used particularly for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way. The purpose of a focus group is to collect in-depth information from a group of people which represent the population of interest (The Health Communication Group 2002). Using these qualitative methods of gathering data, participants were given the opportunity to tell their story in their own way.

The Health Communication Group (2002) further states that the main advantage of focus group methodology is that it allows for in-depth discussion and probing on an issue of interest. —You can collect opinions of more than one person in one session and the interaction between group participants can result in increased elaboration on a topic and broader insight into understanding an issue (The Health Communication Group 2002:2). However, the disadvantage of using this kind of method is that there is a potential for participants to influence one another's opinions.

Eighteen face to face individual interviews were also conducted. According to Kelly (2006), conducting a face to face interview is a more natural form of interacting with people than making them fill out a questionnaire, do a test, or perform some experimental task, and therefore it fits well with the interpretive approach to research. It gives an opportunity to get to know people quite intimately, so that one can really understand how they think and feel (Kelly 2006). This method was adopted because it made it easier for the researcher to maintain rapport with the respondents. The face to face interviews also gave the researcher an opportunity to observe the non-verbal communication of respondents.

In both the face to face interviews and focus group discussions, the individuals were encouraged to tell their stories. The interviews were carried out using interview schedules that had guiding questions. Furthermore, a tape recorder was used to ensure accurate capturing of data.

### **3.4.1 Data Collection Instruments**

Semi-structured interview schedules were developed so as to guide the questions and probe answers that the women and key informants gave. According to De Vos *et al* (2005), researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs or perceptions or accounts of a particular topic. An interview schedule was designed to guide the focus group discussion and in depth interviews with the six rural women and four commuting informants (Appendix B). Another interview schedule was developed to guide the in-depth interviews with the eight key informants (Appendix C). The interview schedules were used in a flexible and informal way that gave room for new questions to be brought up during the interview. This method is also advantageous in that the researcher is able to follow up interesting ideas that emerge in the interview (De Vos *et al* 2005).

### **3.4.2 Data Analysis Strategy**

Data was analysed according to the adaptation of Tesch (1990). The following steps guided the analysis:

- Read through one transcript for meaning.
- Assign labels to the meanings of the text in the margins of the transcript.
- Do this for all the transcriptions.
- Use colour kokis for labelling and grouping labels into themes and categories.
- Revisit the main themes and categories making sure that the themes reflect the main objectives of the study.

- Check the categories to make sure that they are mutually exclusive.
- Develop a framework for depicting the revised themes and categories.
- Write up the discussion of findings using the themes as main headings and categories as sub headings.
- Use the actual quotes of the respondents when discussing the findings and link it to the authors in the literature review.
- Be critical in relating the actual quotes to relevant studies (Compare and contrast).

### **3.5 Limitations of the Study**

Every study has some limitations and this section will look at the limitations that were encountered during the course of the study.

#### **3.5.1 Limitations of Research Design**

According to Brewerton and Millward (2001), the nature of qualitative research is such that the findings are the participant's words and actions and the researcher's interpretation thereof. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of the study puts emphasis on insight and comprehension, as opposed to the collection of detailed, accurate and replicable data (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999). Babbie and Mouton (2001) assert that exploratory studies seldom provide satisfactory answers to research because they are subjective and contain bias. The qualitative approach is, however, still appropriate for this study. Hence the researcher believed this design would help her gain invaluable data from the subjective world of the participants despite its subjectivity. Furthermore, it is important to note that all research designs have some level of bias (De Vos 1998).

#### **3.5.2 Data Collection Approach**

Face-to-face interviews require a lot of time, skill and can be labour intensive. Furthermore, large amounts of data make ordering and interpretation difficult (Brewerton and Millward



2001; De Vos 1998). However, despite its shortcomings, this method according to De Vos (1998) enables the deeper exploration of what the respondents are saying. Furthermore, the researcher was trained in interviewing skills so she was able to probe, seek clarification as well as keep focus. Focus group discussions also have some shortcomings. Some of them include the fact that the researcher has less control over a group than a one-on-one interview and they are often difficult to assemble. Furthermore, if interviewees insist on talking at the same time data might not be easy to capture (Health Communication Unit 2002). Again, some respondents might choose not to respond and hide behind other participants. However, for this study the researcher encouraged participants to speak one at a time so as to capture clear information. Brewerton and Millward (2001) also state that this type of method reveals the participants world view and sheds light on a social phenomena if handled correctly. The researcher used her skills to facilitate the focus groups in such a way that the disadvantages were minimised and the advantages maximised.

### **3.5.3 The Tape Recorder**

De Vos (1998) states that the use of a tape recorder may distract and intimidate participants, making them less inclined to share information. However, prior to using it the researcher asked for consent from the participants and informed them of her reason for using it. A tape recorder, according to De Vos (1998), can capture the data accurately and frees the researcher to watch non-verbal communication and focus on the interview.

### **3.5.4 Sampling**

The study only engaged a small sample of respondents. In this regard, the perception of the women in the study cannot be extrapolated to make broader generalisations. However, for this study the researcher believes that the responses from the interviewees provided very useful information which could be the starting point for further research. Since it is a purposive non-probability sample no generalisations are possible. Nevertheless, a meaningful “window” into the lives of rural women has been opened.

### **3.5.5 Limitations regarding the Researcher**

There is a lack of research on rural women in Matabeleland and their development challenges, therefore the researcher had to rely mostly on literature about women in Africa. Furthermore, this is a small scale study. The researcher is still a novice researcher and the prospects of doing fieldwork in a time-limited period were rather daunting. The researcher could have allowed bias to creep into her analysis of findings. Looking for patterns in qualitative data is a subjective exercise but supervision provided clear guidelines.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the methodology. The research design, the type of sampling to be used, data collection approach, data collection instruments, data analysis, and the limitations relevant in the study were presented. The following chapter focuses on the presentation and the analysis of findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the findings. It begins by providing a profile of the Matabeleland South women and key informants. Furthermore, a brief overview of resources available in the village is provided. A framework for analysis that captures the findings will be provided. The format within which the analysis of the findings will be made is based on the main objectives of and the questions addressed by the study. The analysis will be discussed according to the structure of the framework. The findings will be critically analysed using the various theorists referred to in the literature review.

##### **4.1.1 Profile of the Participants**

The researcher had four sub-samples that were interviewed namely: fourteen women from the Sababa village who formed part of a focus group; six individual interviews with women from the village (not part of the focus group); four individual interviews with women from the village who commuted between Matabeleland South and South Africa in order to trade and eight key informants.

The following tables present a profile of the participants that were interviewed:

**Table 1: Matabeleland South Women Focus Group**

<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD</b>
FG 1	60	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 2	70	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 3	48	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 4	46	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 5	48	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 6	47	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 7	48	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 8	80	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 9	62	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 10	55	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 11	50	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 12	70	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 13	44	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
FG 14	48	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming

**Table 2: Matabeleland South Women: Individual Interviews**

PARTICIPANT	AGE	SEX	LANGUAGE	SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD
W 1	63	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
W 2	43	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms and farming
W 3	40	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms and farming
W 4	55	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
W 5	65	Female	IsiNdebele	Vegetable garden, mopani worms, stokvels and farming
W 6	Unknown	Female	IsiNdebele	Mopani worms, beer brewing and farming

Note: The profiles of these women is similar to the profiles in Table 1

#### 4.1.2 Matabeleland South women's profiles

From the preceding tables, one can see that these rural women are aged 40 and above and do not commute. Most young people migrate in search of greener pastures and as a result there are generally more dependants in rural spaces, mainly women and children. In this situation they eke out a living through vegetable gardens, mopani worms and farming.

**Table 3: Commuting Informants**

PARTICIPANTS	SEX	AGE	POSITION HELD
CI 1	Female	29	2 Years
CI 2	Female	33	8 Years
CI 3	Female	35	7 Years
CI 4	Female	70	20 Years

Note: With the exception of one woman, most cross-border traders are younger persons.

**Table 4: Key Informants**

<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>POSITION HELD</b>	<b>DURATION WORKED</b>
KIA	Female	NGO Committee Member	2 Years
KIB	Female	Senior Journalist	8 Years
KIC	Female	Governor and Resident Minister	7 Years
KID	Male	Editor in Chief	20 Years
KIE	Male	Chief	10 Years
KIF	Male	Acting Chief	3 Years
KIG	Male	NGO Field Coordinator	11 Years
KIH	Male	Provincial Administrator	10 Years

Note: Key Informants hold significant positions

## **4.2 Profile of Resources**

This community has one primary school, one borehole, no health facilities and no secondary schools.

## **4.3 Framework for Discussion of Findings**

The table below provides a framework for discussion and lists the themes and categories that were distilled from the findings that came from the four sub samples.

**Table 5: Framework for Discussing Findings**

THEMES	CATEGORIES
Socio-Economic Realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politics</li> <li>• Economic Context</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Gender Dimensions</li> </ul>
Individual and Community Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriarchy</li> <li>• Sexual Vulnerability</li> <li>• Lack of Support</li> <li>• Cross-border Issues</li> </ul>
Development Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change and Natural Disasters</li> <li>• Access to water</li> <li>• Access to food</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Access to Health Services</li> <li>• Access to Education</li> </ul>
Survival Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetable Gardens</li> <li>• Cross-border Trading</li> <li>• Help from Government and NGOs</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Food Insecurity</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Education</li> </ul>

Note: Findings will be integrated from all the sub-samples and discussed in an integrated manner.

## 4.4 Socio-Economic Realities

The categories to be discussed in this section include politics, economic context, unemployment and gender dimensions. This broad theme of socio-economic realities pertains to the objective: **“explore how women describe their situation in Matabeleland South with regards to their socio-economic realities.”**

### 4.4.1 Politics

Understandably respondents from the government stated that the bad politics do not impact on development in Zimbabwe. In contrast, the majority of the respondents argue that the political situation has had a direct impact on their ability to lift themselves out of poverty. The aspect of politics has been described by respondents in various ways:

*“Well, the political one is a bit tricky, but, fine, I will just give a comment from my own views. It’s politics, the word politics varies and is very tricky because people are put in groups of their political affiliation that does affect people. It truly affects negatively because if you are known to be from this party then it means you cannot benefit from a, b,c, d, you know, things like that but it has really impacted negatively to the development of women in particular in Mat- South. Because if you go out to Mashonaland you will find women owning quite beautiful, big things, big projects but in Matabeleland it’s rare to get that. Maybe because of that as well it has like grown up to be something like history where people don’t want even to stand up and take some government initiatives that come by because they say, anyway, it’s not...(laughs) you know, things like that. But my feeling is that because of that the government has to really work hard and improve the situation so that people will have the confidence to say, this is no longer politics but it’s truly development.”* (Participant KIG, Key Informant)



*“The issue of political involvement in development has been an issue ever since for Matabeleland because of its political history, you know, the Ndebeles, the Shonas, you know, and this has really, really really affected development of women because even if there is a government drive to improve the lives of women, you will find that there is that political interference, you know, people from this side will not benefit from this one, such things. At the end of the day, even the government efforts are politicised. NGO’s are restricted. People fail to benefit the way they should and you find all the resources are channelled to the wrong people. Those that are not supposed to benefit do and those that are genuine, genuine beneficiaries because of their political affiliation tend to be affected.”* (Participant KIB, Key Informant)

*“You find that when the government is bringing aid or assistance in Matabeleland where the Ndebele people live they do it half heartedly, but when they are developing Mashonaland they give with a very big heart. This really affects us as women in this region because we are discriminated against.”* (Participant C12, Commuting Informant)

*–Politics disturbs development. There are many political parties. Yes, there are many political parties and this causes lots of squabbles over power hence hindering any progress in terms of development.”* (Participant KIF, Key Informant)

*“Our leaders are not united and this is why we continue to be neglected.”* (Participant W1, Individual Interviews)

*“I think politics plays a negative role. Some women are dedicated to working in the gardens and do not attend some of the political gatherings and this is interpreted as a sign of disassociation with the political party in question. This in turn puts a strain on relations between the women involved. That is how politics affects women in my opinion.”* (Participant KIC, Key Informant)

*“Because when you go to register, you hear that this is ZANU party food that is MDC party food. If the food came as a result of ZANU effort they don’t want MDC people to benefit.”* (Participant KIA, Key Informant)

It is clear that politics play an influential role in marginalising people. The continuing tension between the Zanu-PF party led by Robert Mugabe and the MDC party led by Morgan Tsvangirai over how to share executive power does not bode well with foreign investors and as a result efforts to rebuild the country are hindered. More specifically, the Matabeleland region has been particularly affected by the prevailing socio-economic and political situation of Zimbabwe. This situation has been attributed to tribal politics which are widely seen as the driving force in the underdevelopment of the Ndebele people who are concentrated in Matabeleland. Historically, the Zanu-PF government was responsible for the genocide in Matabeleland in the 1980s which resulted in many deaths and disappearances (Wiggins 2004). The state of affairs of the Ndebele people are thus exacerbated by the politics of tribalism, drought and ongoing political power struggles.

A contradictory viewpoint from a key informant suggests that sanctions imposed by Western countries are the cause of the development challenges faced by Zimbabwe.

*“You will find that quite a number of clinics, health centers were, actually put up, structures, yes and you will find that in every village there is a village health worker, now, what I can say is affecting this programme, now, is that we have had sanctions imposed on us and as result you will find that these facilities, at times have no drugs.”*  
(Participant KIC, Key Informant)

Western nations have remained sceptical of Mugabe's dedication to democratic reforms and have consequently declined to offer any support to the embattled country. Furthermore, they have challenged the government to commit to more political reforms and an end to human rights abuses before they make aid available (Alertnet 2010). Coltart (2008) agrees that sanctions have contributed to a further decline of the country's economic situation. He, however, indicates that the root cause for the humanitarian and economic crisis lie in

Zimbabwean politics and not in the sanctions despite the fact that the ZANU-PF government continues to blame the sanctions together with the prevailing drought as the main causes for Zimbabwe's economic collapse.

There are four main findings from this section. Sen (1999) says that transparency guarantees and political freedoms should be a priority in development. These encourage the social inclusion of the citizens in decision-making. However, it is clear that these have been neglected in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the squabbles between ZANU-PF and MDC have further led to the political instability and the lack of focused development initiatives. Thirdly, the issue of tribalism has a bearing on the marginalisation of the Matabeleland people, pushing them further into poverty. Lastly, political instability in the country has resulted in foreign investors withdrawing their support, as it is not beneficial for business, further exacerbating the economic decline.

#### **4.4.2 Country's Economic Context**

The majority of the participants made reference to the economic plight of people in Zimbabwe. The following three quotes illustrate the impact of the economic crisis:

*"Yes I was saying, the economy is always pulling women down because the reality is that er.. we, the country is going through a rough patch from the economic point of view . There is no money, and therefore in terms of funding, it is difficult for er.. these women projects to be funded through the government system, er.. So one would hope that er.. the situation would improve."* (Participant KID, Key Informant)

*"I don't know whether it's because we lack the cash to take our children to school, because even if we want to you find that you just don't have the money. Some people even try to take them to better schools but it never works out because of financial problems. It's because our country does not have any money."* (Participant W6, Individual Interview)

*“The country is in a deep economic crisis and parents can’t afford to send their children to school.”* (Participant KIF, Key Informant)

It is clear from the above quotes that Zimbabwe has been going through major social and economic challenges. The incomplete land reform programme, sporadic incidence of violence, hyper-inflation, the shortage of most key commodities, droughts and floods, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic have contributed to a low standard of living (International Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008).

Thus from the above, it may be said that the economic situation in Zimbabwe has impeded on people’s freedoms (Sen 1999) and led to various forms of vulnerability. Furthermore, the macro-economic situation has resulted in hyperinflation and the depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar. The economic crisis together with political instability has hampered the state’s ability to provide for the basic needs of its people.

#### **4.4.3 Unemployment**

All the women stated that there is no employment in the village. Their main source of livelihood is farming. One participant said:

*–There are no jobs unless one decided to generate their own employment.”* (Participant W1: Individual Interview)

Unemployment has resulted in other freedoms being compromised and women being affected. To this end, Sen (1999) says that the capabilities of a person correspond to the freedom a person has to lead one kind of life or another. Deprivation in one area may lead to deprivation in another and may result in people falling into a deprivation trap (Chambers 2005). Against this background it is important for external agencies to provide assistance to such areas so that they can help alleviate them from poverty.

#### 4.4.4 Gender Dimensions

When asked about the extent of vulnerability among women and men, the respondents indicated that women are more vulnerable than men. Gender dimensions have an impact on rural women's access to basic services and vulnerability to development challenges. This was evident when rural women stated that:

*"Women are vulnerable because they are discriminated against in a lot of things; nobody has faith in their capabilities as human beings. They are looked down upon as people who cannot do anything that is why I am saying that women should be empowered and recognised for the work that they do. We can also do those jobs that are referred to as jobs for men, for example I am a pump minder and I am doing the job very well."* (Participant W4, Individual Interviews)

*"Women are vulnerable because they ones who take care of the children. A man can easily ignore his responsibilities."* (Participant W1, Individual Interviews)

Another male key informant said:

*"Women are the ones looking after the families, men can be away from home for days on end so it is the women who have to face the problems in their homes."* (Participant KIF, Key Informant)

Manuh (1998) and Mungwini (2007) indicate that despite the growing recognition of women's contributions there hasn't been any significant improvement in their access to resources or increased decision-making powers. Neither has the dynamism that women display in the economic, cultural and social lives of their communities through their associations and informal networks been channelled into creating new models of participation and leadership. More grassroots initiatives and networking across the country is needed. The Hunger Project (2000) further asserts that not much has been done to practically improve the quality of life of women, especially African rural women.

## 4.5 Individual and Community Circumstances

The discussion of this theme correlates with the following objective: **“To find out the individual and community circumstances that rural women in the drought prone region find themselves in.”** The categories to be discussed include patriarchy, sexual vulnerability, lack of support and cross-border issues.

### 4.5.1 Patriarchy

Patriarchy plays a role in the under development of women, especially rural women. Rural women addressed this in the following way:

*“The cause of our suffering as women is the fact that women are looked down on and most projects are for men and women aren’t incorporated. This draws us back and we ultimately fail to develop mentally and materially.”* (FG2: Focus Group)

*“It is because we, as women are most of the time in the rural areas with nothing to do. If there is no rain we don’t have anything to do. Men can go anywhere they want and you remain stuck at home.”* (FG1: Focus Group)

*“I know this has been said in many spaces but I will say it again. We women deserve to be recognised for the work we do. The recognition that is being given to men should also be given to us, because we also play a huge role in development.”* (FG3: Focus Group)

Two male key informants said:

*“...socially like I said the issue of value systems called patriarchy means rural women are still facing a problem. You look at issues of health it is very difficult for women to discuss issues of HIV and AIDS, in fact even the issues of use of condoms.”(KID, Key Informant)*

*“They are not directly being excluded, as it were. But there is something called patriarchy. The system where we believe that the men have to make decisions. In the absence of the husband the father-in-law might be the ones making the decisions. So the mobility of the daughter-in-law is quite restricted, you see. So at the end of the day, without a policy, probably, the government is not saying women should be excluded. But there are certain systems, traditional systems, where the woman’s movement are just restricted. They are expected to be at home to feed, to look after them. To look after chickens, after all the husband is not there. I am sure even the husband wouldn’t take kindly to a situation where the older parents are complaining that no one was fetching water for them...” (Participant KIH, Key Informant)*

Women are generally being sidelined from fully participating in the society in which they live. Rural women are, however, hardest hit by exclusionary practices. According to Sen (2000), this social discrimination or exclusion refers to the process and outcome of keeping a social group outside the power centres and resources and it is a powerful form of discriminatory practice. In the course of human development, exclusion has taken the form of segregating a group of people from the social, political, economic, cultural, educational and religious domains of societal life. In addition, PACS (2007) further state that women in Africa are the most excluded and discriminated segment of the population. Patriarchy is at the core of the structural element in discriminating women. Patriarchy constrains women in all facets of life. Patriarchy limits women’s ownership and control of property and other economic resources, including the products of their own labour. Women’s mobility is constrained, and their access to education and information is hindered. Over the years, it has been recognised that the

experiences of the majority of women are grounded in both poverty and patriarchy. Both these feed into each other and subject women to exclusion and exploitation (PACS 2007).

It is this exclusion coupled with patriarchal limits that lead to what Sen (1999) calls unfreedoms, which in rural areas are demonstrated by limited access to basic services, which in turn deepen the deprivation trap in communities and especially for women. Rural development as stated by the UNDP (2005) should now include an assessment of changes in the quality of life, broadly defined to include improvement of health and nutrition, education, environmentally safe living conditions, and reduction in gender and income inequalities.

#### **4.5.2 Sexual Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is a critical aspect of rural poverty. Poor people's lack of access to basic services leaves them defenceless and exposed to all sorts of burdens. This is reiterated by the following statements:

*"Now rural women, now let us talk of these deadly diseases, like the HIV and Aids. Now you will find that because of poverty that is prevailing. You will find that rural women are exploited because, now we are talking of food security. If you are a woman who doesn't have enough food and things, now, I can be able to get some cash by actually exposing myself. That's what affects a lot of women, and let me say my province is really affected by the development that is taking place in the region, globally. Now we are talking of the busiest border in the Sub-Saharan, which is the Beitbridge, where you will find thousands of truckers. Now, women will think that they can get easy money there. Now because of poverty, you want to take your child to school and you think that is the best way of getting money and that affects your health, not only your health, even your family itself because the second day, now you are affected by this dreaded disease and it spreads to your husband..."*(KIC, Key Informant)



*“Women generally are the people who face the realities food insecurities in households. You will find women going out there to do all kinds of things and some of these young women would even do the unthinkable like into prostitution to try and save their families.” (KIG, Key Informant)*

From the above responses it is clear that rural women are forced to do the unthinkable as a way of survival. They end up sacrificing their dignity and health so they can survive. Maringira and Sutherland (2010) confirm that rural women are resorting to informal trade and risky behaviour including exchanging sex for food because of they are failing to access adequate food. Nyangairi (2010) found that women use their agency to negotiate obstacles and find solutions to their troubles. However, they also need to navigate the given set of circumstances in which they find themselves and they may do that in unhealthy ways. Nyangairi (2010) points out that some Zimbabwean women who cross the border engage in sex work, mainly for financial benefit. The women then remit their earnings to their families back in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean women who struggle with food shortages resort to sex work (sometimes unprotected) inside and outside of the country in order to obtain food aid and money (Maringira and Sutherland 2010).

#### **4.5.3 Lack of Support Systems**

The following responses highlight the demands made on rural women to provide for their families under difficult conditions without physical or financial support.

*“The challenges that face rural women in Matabeleland South from our observation, as journalists visiting the various areas and covering different types of stories, we have experienced that most of these people are the bread winners, as it were, they are the ones who run the homes, most of the husbands work in South Africa, whether in mines, various industries in South Africa. So the women are the ones who look after the family, they are the ones who take the children to school, they are the ones who know whether children have eaten or not. Some boreholes occasionally dry up, forcing these women to travel long distances to look for water. Some dams also dry up as a result of*

*erratic rainfall pattern and that then presents a very serious problem. The other problem, like I said it is a cattle rearing area, if the dams have dried up, people then rely on boreholes, which then forces these women who would have remained behind their husbands in South Africa to water the other livestock, and you know how difficult it is. It is a major challenge because unlike sometime ago where we used to have some engines at various points in the country, most of those have probably broken down and as a result, you will find women have to pump to give their cattle the necessary water.”* (KID, Key Informant)

*“I think the main problem affecting women is that their project proposals cannot get enough financial support. No project can get off the ground without adequate financial backing. Some organisations do try and intervene where they can assist but it’s quite difficult these days especially with our current economical predicament. Before people could afford to start their own projects using their own resources (buying flour and baking bread and buns to sell etc) but now this is no longer possible because of the financial crisis and former independents are now dependant on aid.”* (KID, Key Informant)

*“There are many problems faced by women. These women form groups where they save money but money is very scarce and this gives them problems. If they could get financial assistance and electricity they could improve.”* (KIE, Key Informant)

Nussbaum (2000) speaking generally of women makes a number of observations. According to Nussbaum (2000), women in much of the world lack support for fundamental functions of a human life. They are less well nourished than men, less healthy and more vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse. They are much less likely to be literate than the males and are faced with intimidation and discrimination in the work place. Women often lack opportunities for play and for the cultivation of their imaginative and cognitive faculties because they have to juggle the roles of being a mother, wife, caretaker of the home and a career (Nussbaum, 2000). The daily lives of the rural women in Sababa epitomises the extreme end of deprivation.

#### 4.5.4 Cross-border issues

According to the Human Rights Watch (2008), the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans is the result of the political and economic crisis which has forced many to be economic refugees in neighbouring countries. All the four commuting informants indicated that the reason they ventured into the cross border trading business was because of the situation in Zimbabwe. Even though they have not completely migrated to South Africa, the fact that they are involved in cross border trading signifies the dire situation in Zimbabwe. Participants said:

*“... we were going through dire financial hardship and as a result I decided to venture into the izikiriyo business. So what I do is I buy them in Zimbabwe and sell them here in South Africa...”* (CI2, Commuting Informant)

*“I regularly come to South Africa to buy food because food insecurity is our biggest challenge. I sell the food back home and some of it I use for family consumption.”* (CI1, Commuting Informant)

One key informant also commented on the subject of cross border issues. However, he indicated that it creates problems for women. He stated that:

*“Obviously the other disadvantage is that you have this husband who is in South Africa but the problem comes to the level of health consideration. One would expect that obviously the spread of diseases is one of the main challenges facing women. They are not there in South Africa; they are at home probably looking after themselves. The husband is not looking after himself, he gets HIV/AIDS and comes home to his wife- gives her HIV. However, as media people we have also had cases of women er.. each time on Christmas er.. husbands come home and some woman would be found pregnant and then she would be stabbed to death. That is one of the major challenges facing women. So it's a.. It's a difficult situation. These cross border issues are a challenge for women.”* (Participant KID, Key Informant)

One of the key findings from this section is that women are faced with a situation where they have to do cross border work to eke out a living. Another finding is that men are forced to work as migrant labourers across the border and some contract HIV/AIDS and infect their wives. Children are left as orphans when both parents die.

## 4.6 Development Challenges

Discussions of this theme are linked to the following objective: **“To explore the most important development challenges in relation to the impacts of climate change, access to water, food insecurity, poverty, access to education and health services and facilities.”**

### 4.6.1 Development and Development Challenges

Various respondents defined development and development challenges differently.

*“In my opinion the word development refers to the progress that is happening in an area and development challenges refers to those things that hinder progress in an area, for example drought and food insecurity.”* (Participant W4, Individual interview)

*“One example where we see development is that of World Vision, which gives people goats and cows to empower them. That’s what I call development. When there is no unity in the country, donors will leave with their aid. This is what disturbs development.”* (Participant W1, Individual interview)

Some key informants indicated that:

*“Development challenges are those factors that affect or retard the progression of a community.”* (Participant KIG, Key Informant)

*“A few examples of developmental challenges are the current drought because this ultimately leads to extreme water shortages. When water is available development is not hindered, people can continue with their garden projects and grow crops and are able to get a good harvest. Since there is no rain this year this is really hindering our progress.”* (Participant KIF, Key Informant)

*“Development challenges from my point of view refer to those things that hinder people from development in their regions. Also, for example, lack of education of local people whereby our children are not going to schools to learn also does affect development. How can they develop their region without education?”* (Participant KIA, Key Informant)

*“Development challenges I would explain it as the things or issues that hinder an individual or community from getting what they want or need. This as well could include education once somebody is not that much educated he tends to be challenged when it comes to upgrading themselves or even the community itself.”* (Participant KIG, Key Informant)

Despite the differences in the definitions, their responses tie in with Sen's (1999) notion of development. Sen (1999) states that there are requirements that should ideally work together in order to bring true development. These include political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. The respondents highlighted the various freedoms that need to be enhanced when one talks of development. These freedoms, as the respondents state, are education, access to hospitals, energy, transport systems, water and finances. One respondent even went further to link development with the political instability in the country which has consequently led to institutional failures. State policies have failed to improve the quality of life particularly of rural women. Thus rural women continue to suffer with little or no opportunities to make choices that they value. The women in the Sababa village do not have easy access to food, medical attention, proper education and almost no political participation which could enable them to lobby for their

rights. It is therefore clear that the state has failed to enhance the capabilities of rural women so that they can actively participate in their own development.

#### 4.6.2 Climate Change and Natural Disasters

All the participants in the study showed that they had an understanding of the term climate change or change in weather patterns. They linked this with their own situation and indicated that what they are going through at the present moment is a result of climate change. They talked about this year's rainfall pattern and indicated that it is a sign of climate change. The respondents said:

*"This year has been particularly bad. We didn't have rain in the beginning then when our crops had dried up, we got the rain and because of that we had drought in this area. That is how I understand the term climate change."* (Participant W1, Individual Interview)

*"This refers to rainfall patterns. It can be that there is too little or lots of rain in an area. For example this province is very dry, we don't get enough rain, we only got rain recently when it was useless, and our crops were already dead."* (Participant W4, Individual Interview)

*"It's the changing weather patterns. Sometimes it makes us think that God has neglected us, because the extent of the weather gets too much. Like now, you see it is so hot and we do not know where to find shade. The heat disturbs the rainfall pattern"* (Participant W6, Individual Interview)

The UN Report (2009) states that climate change may cause adverse environmental and socio-economic consequences including frequency and intensity of heat waves, droughts, water shortages, erratic rain fall and reduced agricultural productivity and food insecurity. In addition, the brunt of these will be borne by poor women and their communities who are dependent on the land and natural resources for their food, livelihood, yet less equipped to

cope with natural disasters and weather variations (IPCC 2007; Toulmin 2009). Climate change represents an immediate and unprecedented threat to food security of hundreds of millions of people who depend on small-scale agriculture for their livelihoods. It is noted that most poor and rural communities depend on agriculture (Toulmin 2009).

There are however, not any clear global or national policies that are being implemented to protect women despite available literature on the impacts of climate change on rural communities especially women. This is a reflection of the world's failure to address the needs of women. The Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the Cancun meeting in 2010 have not yielded any results either.

#### 4.6.3 Water

The responses from the participants on the issue of access to water were mixed, as can be gleaned from the following responses:

*“If the rain does not come there is a shortage because some people get their water from the well. In this village however, some areas have water while others do not. In this area we are very fortunate to have a borehole but some people have to dig their water from underground”.* (Participant W2, Individual Interview)

*“We have one borehole so drinking water is not too much of an issue here. We however need water for our crops.”* (Participant W5, Individual Interview)

*“There is a shortage of water. We have a borehole which we have to share with people from other areas who don't have dams or boreholes of their own. So in the end it is becomes an inconvenience”* (Participant W1, Individual Interview)

*“We are in desperate need of water. As you can see it is so dry so the dams and wells are dry. The only thing that we really count on is this (pointing at a borehole). It's really affecting us because it's connected to food insecurity. You know at times when*

*there is no food and we have water, we can actually drink water to feed the hunger, thus water plays a huge role when we are hungry.” (FG6, Focus Group)*

Findings show that the community has one borehole which they have to share. However, some of the women indicated that they do not have problems accessing water as they stay live close to the borehole. On the other hand, other women displayed a need for water and they attributed the lack of access to water to food insecurity. According to the UNDP Report (2004), limited and unreliable access to water is a determining factor in agricultural productivity in many regions, a problem rooted in rainfall variability that is likely to increase with climate change. In addition, (Toulmin 2009) states that water supports livelihoods of all people through water-consuming agricultural and industrial activities, consumption and sanitation and environmental services. Water is indeed central to Africa’s development challenges.

#### **4.6.4 Food Insecurity**

According to Ogor and Adetokunbo (2007), food security is linked to accessibility, availability, adequacy and utilisation and food insecurity is the opposite. Participants’ responses reflected aspects of Ogor and Adetokunbo (2007)’s definition.

*“In this area the definition of food insecurity begins on this very soil that we are sitting on, this soil is food insecurity. It is dry, there is no grass, no trees, no water all these are what we term food insecurity.” (Participant W4, Individual Interview)*

*“Food insecurity is a word which describes intense hunger. When an area is food insecure it means that the people are not surviving, because how can you survive on an empty stomach? It [food insecurity] refers to the dryness of the land and shortage of rainfall. When this happens it literally means that people have no means of farming.” (Participant W4, Individual Interview)*

*“Food insecurity is when there is no food and when you don’t have money to buy it from the shops.” (Participant W5, Individual Interview)*



The present state of food insecurity was deemed to be bad. Respondents said:

*“This year, people are in trouble. The rains really complicated our situation. We planted and they did not come, our crops dried up. When it did come, it was too late but still we planted, then when we had planted the rain disappeared and our crops withered. We are still waiting for it to come.”* (Participant W2, Individual Interview)

*“Food insecurity is prevalent because there is little rainfall. Often we plant our crops but it only rains after they have been burnt by the sun.”* (Participant W5, Individual Interview)

*“We have a serious shortage of food here, it’s like hunger belongs here, and it does not want to leave us...compared to the whole world I think we are number one.”* (Participant W5, Individual Interview)

In relation to the area under study, Maphosa (2009) states that Insiza district is in the agro-ecological V, which is characterised by low rainfall patterns, poor soils, hot weather and persistent droughts resulting in low agricultural production. The effects of drought result in crop failure which undermines the women’s efforts to fend for their own families and get an income from crops. This consequently increases poverty and vulnerability.

#### **4.6.5 Poverty**

The respondents defined poverty in various ways and this highlights the multifaceted aspect of the term. Davids *et al* (2005) defines poverty as a multifaceted reality consisting of inter alia lack of power, income and resources to make choices and take advantage of opportunities.

Participant W6 highlighted this in the following:

*“When somebody says they are poor, they will be talking about their daily struggles. Everything will be going wrong. To me poverty is about lack of access to money and food, these are very important things in life. However, I don’t know how the young people define poverty, but for me it’s about the lack of food and money. We old people just want money, blankets, food and school fees.”* (Participant W6, Individual Interview)

It was clear that for participant W6, poverty means different things to different people. She points out that the way she defines the term might be different from the way young people do. For her, poverty is linked to a lack of access to money and food. Other indicators of poverty according to the respondents are that it incorporates factors like lack of access to health and education facilities, employment and the shortage of rain and livestock. All the participants highlighted the vicious cycle of poverty in that it manifests itself in a number of ways. This can be their failure to send their children to school, constant illness due to hunger and other development challenges.

Participant W2, states:

*“Poverty is when you cannot meet your basic needs. A poor person is one who has no means of developing himself, has no food and no money to send her children to school.”* (Participant W2, Individual Interview)

Maphosa (2009) and Moseley and Logan (2001) state that rural poverty in Matabeleland is multifaceted and is noticeable because of the apparent deprivations. Poor access to health and educational services, poor roads and infrastructure and food shortages are evident.

Participants also highlighted the extent of poverty in the region.

*“People are really poor. We don’t have access to money, where will we get money when there is so much drought?”* (Participant W6, Individual Interview)

*“People in this area are very poor, this year it has been worse. We have complained in previous years but there will be food on the table even though we will be struggling to send our children to school. This year we could not even harvest anything.”* (Participant W2, Individual Interview)

*“Our children go to school without eating. They only eat in the evening and most fail at school because it is hard to concentrate when one is hungry.”* (Participant W5, Individual Interview)

*“People in this area are very poor. We don’t have any source of employment that can assist us”* (Participant W3, Individual Interview)

It is evident therefore from the responses that various substantial freedoms are being compromised. The economic situation in Zimbabwe has depreciated and the state is failing to meet the basic needs of its citizens and as a result people are being neglected and the rural woman is hardest hit.

#### **4.6.6 Health**

All the participants highlighted that the availability and the access to health services in rural areas is limited. They said:

*“Health challenges are an issue because our economy is not in a stable position, our economy is ailing because of various reasons. One of them, as I have already alluded to, the issue of the droughts, the recurrent droughts have adversely affected the country because government have been forced to end up importing a lot of food and so the health delivery system has been badly affected, the issue of shortages of drugs, the issue of lack of equipment is a major challenge and the fact that we have had a number of cases where some health personnel have left the country to look for jobs, that obviously has affected staffing situation, compounding the situation where we have the shortages of drugs, equipment and also almost in a derelict position, situation. So*

*those have compounded the situation because government was also trying to continue increasing the clinics. This resulting in a situation where in the event of a problem people have to travel long distances, using scotchcarts, there are no ambulances in the rural areas. People in towns talk about ambulances, in the rural areas it's a scotchcart or a wheelbarrow. So those are real challenges. You can imagine someone almost going to labour, you have to run looking for a scotchcart, that is the reality about rural life and so women and children are the most affected. What that definitely means is that probably there is need to continuously invest in the health sector, insuring that health is accessible, clinics are accessible, they are supplied with drugs, personnel recruited, so that having unnecessary deaths that could have been prevented in a situation where there are facilities.” (KID, Key informant)*

*“The major health challenges we face at our rural homes is the shortage of toilets. Shortage of toilets influence people to resort to relieve themselves in the open. Flies then carry Cholera and bring it to people.” (KIA, Key informant)*

*“In terms of health, I think women, mostly in Matabeleland South are overworked because they would go to bearing some of these manual jobs like gold panning, it really wears somebody's body if somebody is doing gold panning. It's a man's job, to be frank because there is a lot of work that is being done and you will find as they are out there the conditions of living are not suitable for women and there are no health facilities, you know, people are living in the bushes and it's also conducive for prostitution, you know, the kind of thing and you find, people, there is lack of education when people are out there in terms of sexual behaviour and all the stuff, there are no condoms, you know, you don't expect anything in the bush there but people live there and they have relations out there and you will find then very high prevalences of HIV and Aids related diseases and there is some sexual related diseases because of a lack of health because what they will be doing is termed illegal so the government doesn't really go out there and reach out there to educate them so it is found they are so much disadvantaged and some unwanted pregnancies and all the stuff.” (KIG, Key informant)*

*“If you are critical we use horse drawn because hospitals are approximately 10km away but the problem is if you get to the hospital there are drug shortages and it is easy to die because of that.” (FG 7, Focus group)*

*“The biggest hospital is in Filabusi and it is quite a distance and we do not have money. At times you can get there but fail to get medication.” (FG 10, Focus group)*

The respondents indicated that access to health services in the community is inadequate. The quality of the little services that are provided is also poor. There is a general lack of drugs, staff and equipment and people have to travel long distances to get to the nearest clinic or hospital. It for the above reasons that the UN (2009) states that rural women are at a disadvantage when it comes to health issues. For instance, in many countries, reproductive health care remains inadequate, and maternal mortality continues to be high, with the highest rates in Sub-Saharan Africa. In every region of the world, the presence of skilled birth attendants is lower in rural than in urban areas. Moreover, the absence of timely medical care, inadequate diet and heavy workload often results in complicated pregnancies and high maternal mortality rates (UN, 2009). It appears that health challenges are not only related to distances or lack of drugs in hospital, they are also linked to poverty and the country's economy.

#### **4.6.7 Education**

Access to education is still a challenge in Zimbabwe. The problem has been further exacerbated by the current economic crisis and the sanctions imposed by the United States and Britain.

Some respondents said:

*“I wouldn't really say that it is about rural women, or rural men because we are talking about education, one would have suspected probably that we are talking about the girl child. The girl child as the situation stands, obviously is affected in the sense*

*that although the, unlike a long time ago where there was preference, there was general preference given to the boy child to go to school because they could think that the girl child could easily be married, and besides one wouldn't want to be giving some other clan, you know, someone who would be giving them a lot of bread. The general situation is that, yes, they are all going to school, but the problem is that there are certain responsibilities the girl child has. The girl child goes to school, she comes back, has to cook for the family, she has to sweep the houses. Sure everything else has been done but if I find that the boy child has been either reading when the sister is busy and, you know, taking care of the other chores at home, that is the general expectation that is there, the girl child has to, is a mother, has to be groomed, trained, that has prejudiced a lot of girls. If they were given an opportunity to also study, they would pass like their counterparts, their brothers. And the other problem is that, early pregnancies, I think, is one other major problem that arises where girls, probably because they are in the rural areas some of them don't have, they end up engaging in pre marital sex, unprotected, and they end up getting pregnant. The government has on a number of occasions pronounced the need to ensure that girls are given the opportunity to be advanced and that has been a positive development. Of course, in terms of rural women, because they are also supposed to go to school, like others, like I said they wouldn't even get an inch of time to do private study and besides in the rural areas, one doesn't know of any major tertiary institution which they could go to. They are not even getting space to do that.” (KID, Key Informant)*

*“Now, but for rural women it is not as easy as we do, talking of urban, yes, because let me say your children have to go to school, the husband is not around, maybe he is working in south Africa. Now in the morning you have to go and herd cattle. You leave early in the morning, now you come back, you have to cook for children. Now when children come back, now, you have to go to the fields and so forth and where do you get time, to study or what?” (KIH, Key informant)*

*“People are not really educated; we only know how to read letters. That is not enough, we wish the government can empower us with education and provide us with teachers.” (FG14: Focus group)*

In general, rural women and girls have very little access to education due to their workload as well as the availability of schools in their villages. The United Nations (2000) report states that a wide range of power imbalances and inequalities between men and women operate in many ways and many a time they reinforce each other. Most of the time the burden of caring for the ill family members is made to rest mainly with women and girls. Women are traditionally responsible for the well being and health of their families. For poor rural women access to education and employment are necessary for ensuring their survival. Women have far less access to education and information than men. According to global studies, only 58 percent of women in developing countries can read and write, compared with 79 percent of men (United Nations 2000).

## **4.7 Survival Strategies**

The discussion of this theme is linked to the following objective: **“To examine survival strategies that rural women adopt in the present situation.”**

### **4.7.1 Vegetable Garden Projects**

All the participants except participant W6 said that their main source of livelihood are vegetable gardens. They indicated that some of the gardens are being supported by an NGO which encourages the women to farm and some of them do not have any support. It is clear that although the NGO is not providing communities with food which they desperately need it is empowering them with farming skills that are very important in sustainable development. Through skills transferral, the women learn how to farm effectively and this contributes to the improvement of their quality of life.

The NGO is helping women to lift themselves out of poverty to a certain extent by providing a social opportunity to alleviate hunger and gain an income, According to Sen (1999), social opportunities refer to the arrangements that society makes which influence the individual's substantive freedom to live better.

However, some participants see the vegetable gardens initiated by NGOs as being a top down approach.

*“There is one NGO that I know which has brought in some nutrition gardens and all the stuff but you find is it what people want? And at the end of the day those nutrition gardens die a natural death because it was like, I feel, that's my feeling in the wrong approach-a top- bottom approach. It should, you need to come down to the people, ask them, what they want and then help them because they will feel they own those projects and will take care of them... some of them are not even producing anything.”*  
(Participant KIG, Key Informant)

In order for development to achieve its goals it should be people-driven and people centred. Korten (1990) states that people centred development puts people at the centre of development by insisting that development should firstly be for people (by creating opportunities for everyone) and secondly by people (which implies that people should decide for themselves what constitutes a better life and be active participants of development initiatives). Furthermore, Korten (1990) points out that an individual who is unable to participate in their own development could be described as deprived. It is important that NGOs and other role players engage with target communities and learn their needs before offering any programmes.

The rural women are quite resilient and have found ways to survive despite deprivation, discrimination, poverty and top down approaches to development. If vegetable gardens are not an option some have taken to commuting across the border to do trade and some have taken to sex work.”



### 4.7.2 Cross-border Trading

Of the 24 women interviewed, four of them were involved in cross border trading, travelling back and forth between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Two of the women said that:

*“I am a cross border trader. I regularly come to South Africa to buy food because food insecurity is our biggest challenge. I sell the food back home and some of it I use for family consumption.”* (CI1, Commuting Informant)

*“... we were going through dire financial hardship and as a result I decided to venture into the izikiriyo business. So what I do is I buy them in Zimbabwe and sell them here in South Africa...”*

It was clear that for the commuting women, their trade is part of efforts to contribute to poverty and food insecurity alleviation. This trade as highlighted by Participant CI1 is a means of gaining income from their own sweat and can be viewed as a form of empowerment and development. The women's personal and institutional capabilities to mobilise and manage resources and to produce sustainable development consistent with their own aspirations (Korten 1990) is development and empowerment in practice. Self mobilisation allows the women to gain access to food and a better life.

### 4.7.3 Help from the Government and NGOs

All the women in the village said that they used to get aid from the government and an NGO that has ceased operating. A new NGO that assists the women to maintain their vegetables gardens has, however, been established. The government needs to support rural women who are highly dependent on the land if there is a poor harvest due to droughts. Participants indicated that the government and NGOs are doing very little to help them. This might lead to women falling further into poverty. It is important for different role players to enhance the actual freedoms enjoyed by people in an area such as Matabeleland South, which is wrought with development challenges. According to Sen (1999), one must have access to the

opportunities that individuals enjoy to utilise economic resources for the purpose of consumption, or production or exchange as part of the development process. Furthermore, individual capabilities crucially depend on, among other things, economic, social, and political arrangements (Sen 1999).

The following responses suggest that very little support is forthcoming from the government in particular.

*“At the moment we haven’t got anything from the government.” (FG7, Focus group)*

*“At the present moment NGOs haven’t done anything because they are also sent by the government they haven’t sent anything and we are still waiting.” (FG5, Focus group)*

*“At the moment, we have no one willing to sponsor our garden. We organise our own resources like seeds and so forth.” (CI4, Commuting Informant)*

*“We haven’t seen government in a long time now.” (CI3, Commuting Informant)*

*“This new NGO does not really help us, all they do is encourage us to grow vegetables. The government is silent” (Participant W5, Individual interview)*

Sen (1999: 53) states that: ~~the~~ institutions can incorporate private initiatives as well as public arrangements and also more mixed structures, such as nongovernmental organisations and cooperative entities. The ends and means of development call for placing the perspective of freedom at the centre of the stage. The people have to be seen, in this perspective, as being actively involved - given the opportunity - in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of the fruits of shrewd development programmes. The state and the society have extensive roles in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities. This is a supporting role, rather than one of ready-made delivery.” However, it is clear that in Matabeleland South villages there is very little infrastructure, no vibrant civil society or an active private sector. It is for this reason that such villages would benefit from a bottom up community development

approach. Government could actively support more NGOs to work in these areas and provide financial support to these NGOs.

## 4.8 Recommendations

The discussion of this theme is linked to the following objective: **“To ascertain the recommendations that they would make to the government and NGOs to improve their situation.”** The recommendations from the women and key informants will be presented below:

### 4.8.1 Policy

The participants feel that policies should be aimed at the empowerment of women in relation to job equity and development initiatives.

*“I would like to put an emphasis on the issue of policy, I believe that women should be given the same treatment as men because in most instances men are given priority yet women are capable of doing the same job.”* (W4, Individual Interview)

*“I know this has been said in many spaces but I will say it again. We as women deserve to be recognised for the work we do. The recognition that is being given to men should also be given to us, because we also play a huge role in development. So my request to the government and policy makers is that women should also be acknowledged; right now it’s like we are not part of the government of Zimbabwe. It’s like the government is only responsible for men’s development not women’s. We are really discriminated such that at times we feel like giving up on life.”* (FG8, Focus Group)

*“Real women are in the rural areas. They are our mothers they are the ones who should be targeted for indigenisation projects, they have demonstrated before that they*

*can look after themselves under harsh conditions. So probably at the policy level one would think that the issue of indigenisation should be taken seriously and women be capacitated through small, through funding schemes by banks etcetera.” (KID, Key Informant)*

*“We need hospitals, we need schools, our children need an education and for us as well, it’s always a challenge not knowing how to get to the hospital when a child is sick. So we want to have a hospital that we can easily access. We want schools and we want the government to assist us as women in our development because as women we are not sitting on our hands but we are actually using them under dire circumstances and we are willing to keep working but we need resources.” (CI3, Commuting Informant)*

#### **4.8.2 Water**

Three women indicated that they would like NGOs to provide them with equipment so that they can remove mud from their only dam.

Some also indicated that they would like NGOs to erect more boreholes.

They also recommended that the government and NGOs should build irrigation schemes.

Some also said:

*“The women are very hardworking and with the right motivation and if they are given the right projects, I believe they can achieve a lot. For example our dam has little water in it and the dam wall needs to be repaired since it burst. Water is leaking out of the dam and if we could get cement and a mechanical scoop we could do the repairs ourselves for food. We are willing to do it.” (KIE, Key Informant)*

*“I would say to the NGO’s, I would think, the give- a- dam project should be revived. If women are capacitated, if women are given water, they can work. They have demonstrated before that they can look after their families.” (KID, Key Informant)*

### 4.8.3 Food Insecurity

The government and NGOs need to provide food for work schemes in the region, which has been hard hit by drought and experienced a dire shortage of food.

The women also recommended that the government and NGOs should assist with food, fertiliser, farming equipment and seeds.

In addition respondents said:

*“They can try and provide us with electricity. Electricity is vital when it comes to development, the women can get peanut butter grinders since peanuts are quite abundant. Even though there is a food crisis we do have peanuts so the women could at least make something from that. If electricity can be made available to us then that expands our range of possible developmental projects.”* (KIE, Key Informant)

*“We are really suffering, the government has to intervene, and especially with this drought otherwise people will die in their homes. They could try and introduce food for work programmes so that people can get food and help develop the community at the same time.”* (KIF, Key Informant)

*“Secondly, the issue of the harvesting of the Mopani worm, I believe that it should be done in a more formal way, instead in a haphazard way, where people end up being cheated by middle men. Such projects should be capacitated through funding, you know. There is no need for a woman to have problems whether the husband is there or not.”* (KID, Key Informant)

### 4.8.4 Poverty

The women indicated that they would like the government and NGOs to provide irrigation schemes so that they can be able to farm effectively even in the absence of rain.

They indicated that funding would help them improve and scale up their vegetable projects so they can be able to improve the quality of their lives and that of their families.

They also suggested additional projects like livestock farming, peanut butter making, baking and sewing.

Provision of employment opportunities was also raised. Two women indicated that young people are beginning to engage in unhealthy lifestyles because of desperation.

One woman said that the women have lost hope of a better future so they would like to have their hope restored.

#### **4.8.5 Health**

All the women interviewed and some of the key informants indicated that they would like to have health facilities nearby so that they can easily access treatment. Five of them added that there should be the necessary medication.

Some of the women also requested for toilets to be built as their absence is contributing to health challenges.

Some added:

*“Development is being hindered by the unavailability of clinics. If we had clinics people could do H.I.V tests and be able to take the right measures before it becomes too late. Medication must be made available in the clinics because some people end up dying because there was no medication in the clinic and they didn’t have enough money to get their own. The government must try to make medication available and make the clinics more accessible to us.”*

(KIG, Key Informant)

*“The government has to intervene and educate people on these diseases, NGOs have done their part but still diseases continue to spread due to medication shortages.”* (KIF, Key Informant)

#### **4.8.6 Education**

There is only one school in the village and it is a primary school. The school is in a bad condition and has a few teachers. There is no secondary school or high school, but the nearest secondary school is a long distance away. Against this background the women recommended that the government builds them a secondary school, renovates the primary school, buys textbooks and hires more quality teachers.

Some also said:

*“I think the main reason we do not have adequate teachers is because there is no electricity in the schools. Another major reason is of course lack of transportation. If they need to go into town to get money they have to walk long distances in the night-time. We do have roads but they are in terrible condition, if only the government could do something to repair the roads. The teachers are unable to go to school premises because there is no transport for them.”* (KIE, Key Informant)

*“The government must try to up the quality of education and reduce tuition fees. The country is in a deep economic crisis and parents can’t afford to send their children to school. They must at least make the fees reasonable.”* (KIF, Key Informant)

#### **4.9 Summary**

This chapter has presented the findings of the study. It has responded to the research objectives including some of the main research questions. In this chapter, the researcher began by giving a profile of all participants and then provided a framework for analysis and discussion based on the framework for analysis. The following chapter offers concluding remarks and recommendations.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the conclusions emanating from the findings. In addition, both the recommendations coming from the participants of the study and the researcher will be presented.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

The main conclusions will be presented in relation to each of the research objectives.

**Objective 1: To explore how women describe their situation in Matabeleland South with regards to their socio economic realities.**

The main findings were:

- That the political instability, economic crisis and disagreements between leaders in Zimbabwe have stunted development.
- That the sanctions instituted against Zimbabwe have further exacerbated the economic crisis and impacted on the government's ability to provide for its citizens.
- That Matabeleland South has been politically and tribally excluded from mainstream development resulting in the province being among the poorest in the country.
- That some social aspects of development have been neglected and as a result women have no access to employment and steady incomes.

**Objective 2: To find out the individual and community circumstances that rural women in the drought prone region find themselves in.**

The main findings were:

- That the migration of males due to food insecurity in Matabeleland South has often meant that women are left behind in rural areas with an increased number of tasks- without any physical and financial support.
- That food insecurity which was described as the major challenge has exacerbated women's vulnerability and as a result they have resorted to cross border trade and risky behaviour such as prostitution for food.
- That some of the respondents believe that the patriarchal system is responsible for perpetuating gender inequality resulting in women being discriminated in the access to resources like land and employment. Furthermore, women believe that the patriarchal system has no faith in their ability as people who are able to empower themselves or make decisions on their own.
- That the economic situation is compounding to the under development of women who already have to contend with discrimination as a result of the patriarchal society they live in. In other words this can be called a double burden.
- That some of the women give priority to their immediate welfare and safety nets like access to money, food and water, among others. As a result they give a second consideration to their social system. In this case, the women's immediate concern is the money to solve their immediate problem and it is only after when these have been solved that they can start challenging the patriarchal social order.

**Objective 3: To explore the most important development challenges in relation to the impacts of climate change, access to water, food insecurity, poverty and access to education and health services and facilities.**

The main findings were:

- That the area is generally dry and not conducive for crops. Recurrent droughts as a result of climate change have further lowered food production and worsened food insecurity.
- That poverty in the rural communities of Matabeleland South is complex and multi-faceted, ranging from a lack of access to water, food, education, health facilities and the abuse of human rights.
- That the rainfall pattern is unpredictable therefore water for domestic use is scarce and is obtained from boreholes or extracted from river beds.
- That the extent of food insecurity in Matabeleland South is seen in people cutting back on the number of meals consumed to one or two times in a day, reducing meal sizes, a heavy reliance on food aid interventions and remittances from relatives in the diaspora.
- That women see education as a tool that can help their children to climb the social ladder. They believe that sending their children to (better) school(s) will enable them to empower themselves to fight poverty, joblessness, and gender inequality.

**Objective 4: To examine survival strategies that rural women adopt in the present situation.**

That an NGO has attempted to restore the social and economic status of the women through vegetable projects. These projects offer practical ways of enhancing the capabilities and entitlements of the women through job creation and skills development among others. These rehabilitative strategies have, however, faced challenges because of a lack of water, top down approaches and the socio-economic conditions in the country.

That there is no social protection offered to vulnerable families and as a result women have resorted to cross border trading.

**Objective 5: To ascertain the recommendations that they would make to the government and NGOs to improve their situation.**

The main recommendations were:

**Policy:**

That policies on indigenisation should be taken seriously and banks should provide funding to help women develop themselves by setting up income generating projects.

That policies should recognise the role women play in promoting development.

That women should take control of their lives as they are responsible for their own development.

**Food Insecurity:**

That the government should introduce food for work programmes so that people can get food and help develop the community at the same time.

That harvesting Mopani worms should be done in a more formal way to reduce cases of women being cheated by middlemen. The Mopani worms should also be value added.

**Health:**

That development is being hindered by the unavailability of health facilities and medication.

The government must make medication available and improve communities' access to health facilities.

**Education:**

That the government should improve the quality of education and reduce tuition fees since the country is in a deep economic crisis and parents can't afford to send their children to school.

That the government builds a secondary school, renovates the primary school, buys textbooks and hires more qualified teachers in the school.

**Water:**

That the dam wall needs to be repaired since it burst. Water is leaking out of the dam and the participants need cement and a mechanical scoop to repair the wall on their own.

That NGOs should revive the give- a- dam project.

**Poverty:**

That the government and NGOs should provide irrigation schemes so that women can be able to farm effectively even in bad rainy seasons.

That the government and NGOs should provide funding to help women scale up their vegetable projects so they can be able to boost productivity and earn an income that will improve the quality of their lives and that of their families. Furthermore, additional projects like livestock farming, peanut butter making, baking and sewing should be implemented.

### **5.3 Recommendations from the Researcher**

#### **5.3.1 Recommendations to the Government**

- That the government should implement monitoring and evaluation tools to measure the impacts of its services.
- Women consist the bulk of the population in rural areas. The government should integrate gender development into national policies and programmes to reduce discrimination. These policies should ensure that women effectively participate at all levels.

#### **5.3.2 Recommendations to NGOs**

- It is clear that NGOs are still technocratic, bureaucratic and top-down in nature. I recommend that NGOs should consult with communities to find out what their needs are before they implement any strategies. Furthermore, their projects should promote people centred development.
- NGOs should strive to promote sustainability so that when donors disappear or face recession, the women will be able to continue with projects and community development.
- NGOs should align their projects with those of the government so that they can access public funding to help them reach a greater target of needy people.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations for further research**

- Mixed methodology approaches should be used to ascertain the scale and nature of development challenges.
- A large scale research on the impact of climate change on social development, human security and the MDGs.
- A large scale research on government and NGO's response to food insecurity in Matabeleland South.

### **5.4 Concluding statement**

This study has explored the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe. It has explored development challenges such as poverty, climate change, and inadequate access to water, food insecurity and access to health and education facilities. The study has also explored the role that the government, NGOs and women play in poverty alleviation. The study also offered recommendations on how to alleviate the development challenges faced by the rural women in Matabeleland South. This is a limited study which targeted only one village. However, the insights gained could be useful for conducting a large scale study using a mixed methodology approach.

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## **APPENDIX A: RESEARCH CONCESSION LETTER**

To the Matabeleland Provincial Administrator

RE: Permission to Conduct Academic Research

**Topic: Exploring the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe**

My name is Gretchen Ndhlovu and I am currently doing a Master's degree in Social Development at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. I am writing a thesis on the above topic with a specific focus on the Sababa Village in Filabusi.

I would like to conduct research in the Matabeleland South Province particularly the Sababa Village. I hope to be able to interview twenty four women and eight key informants so as to explore the development challenges facing rural women in the province. Furthermore, I would also like to explore the role that the government and NGOs play in addressing the development challenges.

The information received will be mainly for academic purposes. Any publication of findings will ensure anonymity. I promise to comply with the ethical standards that are expected of me.

I am planning to conduct these interviews within the month of June 2010 and I would appreciate a positive response.

Should you require further information, please feel free to contact me at:

[gretchennoku@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gretchennoku@yahoo.co.uk)

0027 78 387 0750/ 00263 773 857 963

Thank you.

Looking forward to hearing from you.



Yours faithfully

Gretchen N Ndhlovu (Miss)

## **APPENDIX B: SEMI –STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE MATABELELAND SOUTH WOMEN**

RESEARCHER: GRETCHEN NOKUKHANYA NDHLOVU

### **SECTION A: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION.**

- i) The interview schedule covered one focus group comprising of fourteen women, six individual interviews with women from the village and four individual interviews with commuting informants.
- ii) Topic of the study: Exploring the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe.
- iii) Purpose of the study: The researcher is completing this research in partial fulfillment of a Masters in Social Development Degree. The results of these findings will be made available to all key informants in a summarized form.
- iv) Establishing rapport: the researcher explains the purpose of the study, assures the participants about ethics and confidentiality, encourages participants to give honest opinions and negotiates the use of a tape recorder.

### **SECTION B**

This schedule will cover questions pertaining to some basic details about the participants; development challenges facing rural women in relation to food insecurity, access to water, climate change, health, education and poverty; responses to development challenges and recommendations that could be made to government and the NGO sector.

- 1) Participant's age, language, length of stay in the community and level of education
- 2) What do you do for a living? (How do you put food on the table?)
- 3) What does your husband do for living/children?
- 4) What kind of activities are you involved in?
- 5) What kind of formal and informal employment is available in the community?
- 6) What criterion is used in recruitment?

- How do you understand the terms poverty, food insecurity, climate change, lack of access to water, health and education? Can you describe this by giving an example?
- 7) Please try and explain the extent of poverty, food deficiency, and lack of access to education, health and water and the impacts of climate change in the area. Please motivate your answer.
  - 8) How do you understand the term development challenges? Please explain your answer.
  - 9) Why do you think Matabeleland South is faced with the particular development challenges?
  - 10) How do you think these affect the economic and social development of women and the community?
  - 11) How far do the community/ individuals travel to collect firewood and water?

#### **SECTION C: FOOD INSECURITY**

- 1) What kind of farming do you do?
- 2) What do you use the crops for?
- 3) What have been your major problems in farming? (Is it drought, climate change or lack of access to water?)
- 4) How do all these impact on food security?
- 5) When was the last year you had a good harvest?
- 6) What have been your experiences with food insecurity in Mat South (How have you dealt with it?)
- 7) What can be done to tackle these issues?

#### **SECTION D: CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 1) What has been the rain fall pattern in the past couple of years? (Little rain, lots of rain or drought?)
- 2) How often do you experience serious drought due to whether changes? (When was the last year you experienced it?)
- 3) What has been your worst year like?
- 4) What can be done to tackle these issues?
- 5) How do weather changes affect food security and livelihoods?

- 6) Has the government done anything to deal with the problem the drought? (If yes, in what way?)
- 7) Does the government and NGO's provide assistance during these times? (In what way?)

#### **SECTION E: HEALTH**

- 1) Do women have access to health facilities?
- 2) What are the most common health problems in the area? Would you say there are related to a lack of access to food?
- 3) How are these health problems dealt with?
- 4) How many hospitals are available in the province?
- 5) What other health issues do you consider to be important?

#### **SECTION F: EDUCATION**

- 1) How many primary, secondary, high schools and universities/skills development centres are there in the region?
- 2) Do you have access to those institutions if not why?
- 3) What are the conditions in the schools (availability of teachers, books, classrooms etc?)
- 4) How many in this group have had access to different schools?

#### **SECTION G: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES**

- 1) What are the gender differences in access to resources and what is the reason for these differences?
- 2) What natural resources and services help individuals, households and the community cope better with development challenges?
- 3) How (and who) is land allocated to in the community
- 4) Do men and women have equal opportunity to own or inherit land?
- 5) What do individuals, households and the community do if:
  - Drought becomes more frequent
  - Changes in growing seasons
  - Shortage of water

- 6) During natural disasters are there natural resources (mopane worms, thatch, indigenous fruits etc) that contribute towards household livelihoods?
- 7) What makes women vulnerable?
- 8) Are there any social networks to help reduce vulnerabilities of women? Explain
- 9) Who is responsible for your development?

## **SECTION H: PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES**

- 1) Are you aware of any programmes and strategies that the government and NGOs have put in place to improve the plight of woman?
- 2) Are these programmes and strategies effective?
- 3) Are the programmes sustainable? Please explain how they have been made sustainable?
- 4) To what degrees are you involved in participation in these programmes?
- 5) How are these projects and programmes monitored? Please explain.
- 6) How long have these programmes been running?
- 7) What are their social and economic benefits to women?

## **SECTION I: RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) What are the aspirations of women in the community?
- 2) What would you like to see happen that will help you cope better with development challenges? What recommendations should be made to government about addressing these challenges (food insecurity, agriculture, climate change, health, education and poverty?)
- 3) What kind of policies or programmes do you think would be effective in reducing vulnerability of women
- 4) What would be the best way to empower women to help them cope with development challenges
- 5) Are there any specific needs you feel should be addressed urgently in order to build the coping and adaptive capacity of women?
- 6) What challenges do you think NGOs and government have in providing these resources?

- 7) Are you aware of any special activities that rural women initiated in response to development challenges?
- 8) Any other recommendations?

University of Cape Town

## **APPENDIX C: SEMI –STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS**

### **SECTION A: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION**

- i) The eight key informants were the Village Chief, Acting village chief, two NGO representatives, the Matabeleland South Governor and Resident Minister, Matabeleland South Provincial Administrator, Editor in Chief and Senior Journalist.
- ii) Topic of the study: Exploring the development challenges facing rural women in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe.
- iii) Purpose of the study: The researcher is completing this research in partial fulfillment of a Masters in Social Development Degree. The results of these findings will be made available to all key informants in a summarized form.
- iv) Establishing rapport: the researcher explains the purpose of the study, assures the participants about ethics and confidentiality, encourages participants to give honest opinions and negotiates the use of a tape recorder.

### **SECTION B**

This schedule will cover questions pertaining to some basic details about the participants; development challenges facing rural women in relation to food insecurity, climate change, and access to water, health, education facilities and poverty; responses to development challenges and recommendations that could be made to government and the NGO sector.

- 1) Participant's position, gender, occupation and job description as well as length of service (explore the details)
- 2) Development challenges facing rural women in Mat South (food insecurity, climate change, access to water, health, education and poverty). How do you understand the term development challenges?
- 3) What do you understand by poverty? Can you describe this by giving an example?
- 4) What is the extent of poverty in Mat South? Please motivate your answer.

- 5) What are the specific challenges facing rural women in Mat South? Please give explanations for your answer
- 6) What have been your experiences with food insecurity in Mat South (How have women dealt with this particularly, give examples)?
- 7) What are the health challenges that you think impact on rural women ?(Explore experiences that you have had-family members, older women)
- 8) What is the scope of access of to education for rural women (Why do you think this is so, how can it be improved, is it different from men?)
- 9) Describe how climate change has impacted on agriculture and land). Please give your experiences).
- 10) In which way does the political environment play a role in the development of Mat South?

## **SECTION C**

This part looks at strategies that could be adopted to address development challenges.

- v) Are you aware of any programmes and strategies that the rural women of Mat South have put in place to address the challenges? ( For Journalist, Editor, Chiefs)/ Please tell me about the programmes that you have put in place to address these challenges? (NGO, Government)
- vi) Are these programmes and strategies effective (Explore: are they meeting the targeted desired groups that need to be helped?)
- vii) Are the programmes sustainable? Please explain how they have been made sustainable?
- viii) To what degrees are rural women involved in participation in these programmes?
- ix) Are rural women and men equally disadvantaged because of the development challenges (Explore if the answer is yes and if no ask why?)
- x) How are these projects and programmes monitored? Please explain.
- xi) How long have these programmes been running and what are the social and economic benefits for women?



## **SECTION D**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i) What recommendations should be made to government about addressing these challenges (food insecurity, agriculture, climate change, health, education and poverty?)
- ii) How do you think resources such as maize, fertilizer, food staff are made available to the rural poor? (Explore role of NGO and government)
- iii) What challenges do you think NGOs and government have in providing these resources?
- iv) Describe the political, socio economic environment and its impact on the rural poor women in Matabeleland South. How is the developmental agenda being compromised?
- v) Are you aware of any special activities that rural women initiated in response to development challenges?
- vi) Any other recommendations?

## APPENDIX D: PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is using another's work and to pretend that it is one's own.
2. I have used the **Author Date** Method as the convention for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this research from the work, or works of other people has been attributed and has been cited and referenced.
3. This research is my own work.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

University of Cape Town